

**WEST MICHIGAN TRAILS AND GREENWAYS COALITION**

**EMPLOYEE BENEFIT MANUAL**

**Approved 10/8/24**

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***1. Mission & Vision Statement***

West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition (WMT) mission is to coordinate regional trails/greenways network that connects communities to each other, to the natural areas, parks and landmarks of the region, and connects people to the land and to other people. WMT helps preserve and protect the wetlands and wildlife habitats while providing transportation alternatives, recreational venues, and healthy lifestyle options.

**OPERATIONS**: Local trail advocates include volunteer “friends’ groups,” greenways advocates, land conservancies, interested citizens, like-minded organizations, and local units of government. These volunteer trail groups in many instances work with a local government entity to help develop and maintain local trails. Many trail groups are run by volunteer boards and have practically no overhead costs.

***2. General Provisions***

This Employee Handbook is intended to serve as a guideline, describing the basic personnel policies and practices ordinarily applied by WMT. It is not intended to create a contract and is not a contract of employment.

WMT reserves the right to make changes, sometimes, with or without notice, in the policies and practices described in this Handbook. Moreover, because it is impossible to anticipate every situation that may arise, WMT reserves its right to address a situation in a manner different from that described herein if, at management's sole discretion, the circumstances so warrant.

For questions about the policies and practices described in this Handbook please contact the WMT Executive Board (“EB”) Chair

***3. Equal Employment Opportunity***

It shall be the policy of the WMT to provide equal membership/employment/service opportunities to all eligible persons without regard to race, religion, color, national origin, citizenship, age, sex, marital status, parental status, handicap, membership in any labor organization, political affiliation and, for employment only, height, weight and record of arrest without conviction."

I certify that the practices of this organization conform to the policy of nondiscrimination stated above.

 Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Aaron Bodbyl-Mast, Chair\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Any employee who believes that she/he or any other employee of WMT has been discriminated against is strongly encouraged to report this concern promptly to the WMT Chair.

***4. Terms and Conditions of Employment***

####  A. At-Will Status

Employees of WMT are employed at will, which means that they are not hired for any definite period and either they or WMT may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause.

Only the WMT Chair has the authority to make any promises to employees regarding the duration or terms of employment that are at variance with the policies contained in this Handbook; to be binding, such promises must be in writing and signed by the Chair.

# B. Classification of Employees

Full-time employees are those employed to work on a regular basis for 40 hours per week. They are eligible for all benefits described in this Handbook, if they meet the applicable requirements, such as length of service.

Part-time employees are those employed to work regularly for at least 20 hours per week or more. They are eligible for only those benefits stated in this Handbook to be available to part-time employees.

A contract employee’s employment terms are contained in individual contracts, including length of the contract in year(s) and/or months, or for a specific project.

Temporary employees are those hired with the understanding that their employment will not continue beyond a (1) stated date, or (2) beyond completion of a specified project or projects, or (3) that are hired intermittently on an as needed basis provided that the duration of such employment shall not exceed six months in a single year.

All employees of WMT, whether full-time, part-time or temporary, are employed at will. See “Terms and Conditions of Employment” section regarding at-will employment.

Independent contractors are non-employees paid on a fee-for-service basis to perform certain specified services. Volunteers are those who provide services to WMT­ without financial compensation, other than reimbursement of authorized expenses. Neither independent contractors nor volunteers are considered employees of WMT nor are they covered by this Employee Handbook.

# C. Exempt/Non-Exempt Employees; Overtime Pay

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) establishes the following categories for pay purposes:

* **Exempt Employees:**

Exempt Employees are not subject to the requirement in the FLSA requiring overtime pay. Exempt employees are employed in a bona fide executive, administrative or professional capacity.

* **Non-exempt Employees:**

All employees, other than exempt employees, are entitled under the FLSA, to receive overtime pay. Compensation for hours worked over 40 hours within any week will be paid one and one-half times the employee's regular hourly rate. Non-exempt employees must obtain advance permission from the Executive Director before working more than 40 hours in a work week.

Non-exempt employees are employees who do not serve in a bona fide administrative, professional, or executive capacity, (e.g., clerical personnel).

# D. Comp Time Policy for Extra Hours Worked

In the event a meeting or special assignment requires a salaried employee to work beyond the mandatory 8 hours required in a day or during a weekend day or holiday, he or she will earn compensatory time off during the regular work week, provided that:

1. The amount of time and date it is to be used is authorized by the Executive Director (“ED”).
2. Unless otherwise arranged with the ED or Chair, the comp time is taken within two weeks of the time it is earned; otherwise, the comp time accumulated is lost.

In the event a meeting or special assignment requires an hourly employee to work beyond their regular work hours in a day or during an unscheduled workday, he or she will earn compensatory time off until the total time worked exceeds 40 hours. After 40 hours, an hourly employee is legally entitled to receive overtime pay. The comp time can be taken only if:

1. The amount of time and date it is to be used is authorized by the ED; and
2. The comp time is taken within two weeks of the time it is earned; otherwise, the comp time accumulated is lost

## E. Time Sheets

A timesheet must be completed by all non-salaried WMT staff bi-weekly. The timesheet should reflect actual hours worked on a given day. Leaves should be recorded on your timesheet in the designated areas. The internal billing section of the timesheet is used to record the details of any hours worked on a specific project related to a grant or contract. Your timesheet should be signed by you and your supervisor and submitted to EB at each monthly meeting.



West Michigan Trails & Greenways Coalition

# F. Reporting to Work

Employees are expected to provide advance notice, where possible, of absences from work. If you are absent from work or late for any reason and have not received advance permission for the absence, please call the ED or Chair to report your absence or lateness. Absence without notice for three days may be considered a voluntary resignation

G. Work Schedules. WMT's regular workweek is defined as five days a week and eight hours per day, not including an unpaid lunch period. WMT provides flexible work schedules to accommodate individual lifestyles and ease transportation concerns and therefore offers flexibility in start times and the option for working from home. Work schedules and/or working from home will be approved by ED.

***5. Compensation and Benefits***

***A. Payroll***

Employees are paid twice a month on the 1st & 15th of each month. If one of those dates falls on the weekend, the employee shall be paid on the Friday preceding the weekend of either the 1st or 15th of that month.

Upon termination of employment, the employee will be paid any wages earned but not yet paid. Any exceptions to a time sheet after it is turned in shall be made up in the next pay period.

***B. Travel Policies***

1) Basic Policy

Travel arrangements should be made in the most economical combination of expense, time and convenience. Though strict adherence to these policies may not always be possible, departures from them must be justified and approved in advance by the ED or Chair.

2) Corporate Credit/Debit Cards

a) WMT corporate credit/Debit cards are issued for travel and office purchases. Charges must be entered into the monthly spreadsheets and be accompanied by a receipt.

4) Travel Expenses

(a) Transportation

1. Travelers must use the most economical mode of transportation available. For example:
	* + 1. Air travel must be coach or economy class.
			2. Rental cars shall be either standard or compact sedans. Rental cars should only be used when a more economical mode of transportation is not available.

(ii) Use of personal vehicles for business transportation will be reimbursed at the current IRS mileage rate.

(b) Hotel Accommodations

1. Only standard room accommodation will be reimbursed (unless other accommodation is approved and made for business purposes).
2. If sharing a room with a friend or family member increases the room rate, staff will be responsible for the increased cost.

Travel Policies Cont’d

(iii) Movie rentals or other entertainment expenses will not be reimbursed.

(iv) Staff may be requested to share rooms, when possible, for major events or meetings to provide overall cost efficiency.

(c) Meals

1. WMT will not reimburse staff for meals at meetings held in the Grand Rapids area when the only participants are WMT staff.

For reimbursement for meals when traveling outside Grand Rapids, see item (ii) below.

1. When hosting meetings at restaurants or using caterers, average costs should be in the range of:

##### Breakfast: $11.75 per person

##### Lunch: $12.00 per person

##### Dinner: $28 per person

(d) Miscellaneous Expenses

1. The following items are reimbursable on an actual cost basis:
	* + 1. Baggage handling charges and tips
			2. Telephone charges relating to WMT business
			3. Laundry and dry-cleaning charges for trips longer than 5 days

***C. Benefits***

WMT reserves the right, in its discretion, to change the nature of the benefits offered to employees, or to change insurance carriers, deductibles, premiums, retirement, or other features of any benefit. In addition, WMT may decide to discontinue one or more benefits. Covered employees will be notified of such changes or discontinuations as soon as practicable.

***1. Paid Holidays***

1. West Michigan Trails and Greenways Coalition observes 13 holidays annually. 9of the 13 holidays are onthe same dates as the Federal Government holidays. The Federal Government holidays that WMT observes are as follows:

New Year's Day

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Presidents' Day

Memorial Day

Juneteenth

Independence Day

Labor Day

Veterans' Day

Thanksgiving Day

Christmas Day

1. In addition, WMT observes the Friday immediately following Thanksgiving Day as a holiday, and two additional “holidays” that are designated by the ED or Chair in January of each calendar year.
2. With the permission of the ED or Chair you may work on any one of these official holidays and substitute another day as your holiday.
3. Employees may exchange scheduled holidays to observe their faith's religious holidays.
4. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, it will be observed on the following Monday. If a holiday falls on a Saturday, it will be observed the preceding Friday.
5. Part-time employees are entitled to be paid on a pro-rated basis, for only those designated holidays on which they ordinarily work according to their regular, approved schedules.

***2. Annual Leave/Vacation***

It is WMT's belief that vacation time is beneficial to an employee's health and work, and therefore all employees are encouraged to take their earned vacation each year. Leave schedules should be approved by the ED or Chair. Employees will accrue leave as follows:

All full-time non-managerial staff will accrue *annual leave* at the rate of 12 days (96 hours) per year with one additional day added at the end of each year of employment to a maximum of 15 days (120 hours) per year.

The ED will accrue 15 days (120 hours) of *annual leave* per year with one additional day added at the end of each year of employment to a maximum of 20 days (160 hours) per year.

Part-time employees working at least 20 hours per week or more will accrue vacation on a prorated basis. Interns accrue 5 days (40 hours) of leave during their six-month employment period.

Leave is earned daily and credited to an employee's leave balance each pay period. Leave may be taken as it is accrued. Employees may accumulate up to 160 hours (20 days) of annual leave. Once an employee has accumulated this maximum, leave no longer accrues until some of the previously accrued leave is taken and the balance falls below 160 hours. Annual leave (up to the accumulation maximum) can be carried over from one calendar year to the next.

***3. Sick Leave***

All full-time staff accrue 10 days (80 hours) of sick/personal leave per year. (1 hour is accrued for every 35 hours worked according to the law taking effect January 2025).

Part-time employees working at least 20 hours per week or more accrue sick/personal leave on a prorated basis. Leave may be taken as it is accrued.

Full-time employees may accumulate up to 960 hours (120 workdays) of sick/personal leave. Once an employee has accumulated this maximum, leave no longer accrues until some of the accrued leave is taken and the balance falls below 960 hours.

Sick/personal leave (up to the accumulation maximum) can be carried over from one calendar year to the next but will not be payable to you in the event of termination or retirement.

Sick leave is to be used for visits to the doctor, dentist and all health-related time lost from work, both for the employee and health matters of immediate family members.

An employee may use 2 days (16 hours) per year of accrued sick/personal leave as personal leave. This may also be used for such things as observance of religious holidays, or personal business that cannot be conducted except during working hours.

***4. Family and Medical Leave/Maternity/Paternity Leave***

Employees who have been employed for one year without a break in service, and who have worked at least 1,000 hours during the 12 months period immediately preceding the request for leave, may take a total of 16 work weeks of unpaid family leave during any 24-month period for Family and Medical Leave. Family and Medical Leave is unpaid, but an eligible employee may substitute accrued paid leave (sick and vacation) for the unpaid leave provided herein.

Family leave may be taken for maternity/parental leave after birth or placement for adoption or foster care, to care for the employee's spouse, child or parent who has a serious health condition, or for a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform his/her job.

Employees may use sick and vacation or any accrued portion thereof and are entitled to unpaid leave for the balance of the 16-week period. Total leave including sickness and vacation may not exceed 16 weeks. WMT will continue to cover the employer's share of the cost of the employee's health insurance coverage during this period. The employees will be expected to continue to pay their share of health insurance coverage. Vacation and sick leave do not accrue during a leave of absence. A leave of absence is defined as an extended approved absence beyond 16 weeks

WMT will guarantee the same or a comparable position upon the employee's return from leave.

***5. Bereavement Leave*** WMT provides paid leave of up to three days for a death in the immediate family and two additional days if travel is required. The immediate family is defined as spouse, parent, sibling, child, or grandparents of an employee’s family and the family of the employee's spouse. Additional leave, if required, should be charged to vacation. Additional administrative leave or leave without pay requires the personal approval of the ED or Chair.

***6. Jury Duty***

While an employee is on jury duty, WMT will continue to pay their full salary. However, the employee is expected to reimburse WMT for payments received for jury duty services, minus any actual out-of-pocket expenses that would not have otherwise been incurred.

***7. Military Leave***

Upon request, an employee required to engage in training for the Reserve Forces of the United States or the National Guard will be granted a leave of absence.

For a maximum period of two weeks for each such leave required WMT will pay the employee the difference between his or her regular base salary and his or her military pay for the leave period.

Employees may opt to use unused Vacation for military leave.

***8. Unpaid Leave***

Leave without pay requires the approval of the ED or Chair. All other types of accrued leave must be exhausted before leave without pay may be granted.

While on leave without pay, an employee does not accrue or receive benefits and (except for maternity/parental leave) is required to cover the entire cost of health benefits.

***9. Worker's Compensation***

All full and part-time employees of WMT are covered by Workers Compensation Insurance which provides benefits if an employee sustains an injury arising out of or in the course of employment with WMT.

An employee must inform his/her supervisor as soon as possible after an injury. Failure to provide written notice of an injury within 30 days of the injury could result in a loss of claim.

***10. Health Insurance/Dental Insurance***

WMT may choose to offer health, dental, or eye insurance as well as a Health Savings Account (“HSA”), a Flexible Savings Account (“FSA”), or catastrophic health insurance benefits to all full-time and eligible part-time employees to be negotiated at the time of employment. (as of 9/30/24 WMT does not offer any medical/dental/eye insurance, nor does it offer HSA or FSA).

***11. Life Insurance/Disability Insurance***

WMT may choose to offer life and disability insurance to all full-time and eligible part-time employees.

***Life Insurance***

* Effective with first date of employment
* Available to all employees who work at least 20 hours per week
* WMT payment of premiums to be negotiated.
* Coverage to be negotiated
* Accidental death coverage to be negotiated
* Additional coverage is available to be paid by employee

***Long-Term Disability***

* Effective with first date of employment
* Available to all employees who work at least 20 hours per week
* WMT payment of premiums to be negotiated.
* Benefits to be negotiated.

***12. Pension Plan***

The WMT may offer a pension or retirement plan and provide matching contributions if the employee provides the required contribution.

***6. Annual Performance Reviews***

Performance reviews of employees will be conducted annually, although new employees will additionally be reviewed during the first three months. Performance reviews are intended to identify both those aspects of the job which are being performed well and those aspects that need attention. They are also a formal opportunity for employees to express any concerns they might have about the job or about employment with WMT. Reviews for the ED will be performed by the WMT Chair during the final month of each calendar year. Reviews of all other employees will be performed by the ED within 90 days following the ED’s annual review.

***7. Corrective Action / Dismissal***

When WMT’s ED has identified performance issues, instances of unacceptable behavior or other problems related to employment of any employee, a variety of steps might be taken, up to and including termination. In some cases, the employee might be given an oral or written warning. In other cases, immediate probation, suspension, demotion, termination, or other corrective action might take place. WMT reserves the right to determine what it believes is an appropriate response, and to implement it.

***8. Conflict Resolution and Grievance Procedures***

If an employee feels that inappropriate corrective action has been taken against him/her, and the employee has been unable to resolve the matter informally by speaking with the ED, the employee may appeal any action taken by the ED to the WMT Chair. The WMT Chair will conduct a review of the incident and will work toward a resolution through a thorough discussion with the employee of his or her complaint. If there is no resolution at this level, the Chair will provide a written response to both the ED and employee containing his/her recommendations. Any decision made at this point by the ED will be final.

If the WMT Chair has taken corrective action against the ED that he/she believes is inappropriate, the ED may appeal such action to the EB. If there is no resolution at this level, any decision made by the Chair will be final.

Temporary employees are not entitled to use the formal Grievance Procedure outlined above but are encouraged to discuss any concerns they may have with their supervisor.

***9. Confidentiality***

WMT and its employees and contractors have an ethical and legal obligation not to divulge confidential information to anyone inside or outside the organization. Further, no employee/contractor shall divulge any business-related conversations held and/or overheard during their employment/contract w/WMT. All business-related conversations/information are considered confidential to WMT and its operations. This confidentiality agreement applied while employed/contracted with WMT, and for up to one year following employment and/or contract end.

***10. Discriminatory Harassment***

It is a violation of federal law to harass anyone at work because of their race, color, age, religion, sex, disability, national origin, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, matriculation, political affiliation, source of income, place of business or residence, pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions.

Any employee who has a complaint of discriminatory harassment at work by anyone must bring the complaint to the attention of the ED and/or the WMT Chair. All complaints will be addressed through the "Conflict Resolution and Grievance Procedure".

***11. Sexual Harassment***

Sexual Harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

* submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly as a term or condition of an individual's employment;
* submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or,
* such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Any employee who feels that he or she is a victim of sexual or other harassment by the ED or other board or staff member should bring the matter to the immediate attention of the ED if the ED is not a party to the harassment, or to the WMT Chair if the ED is a party to the harassment. An employee who is uncomfortable for any reason in bringing such a matter to the attention of the ED shall report the matter to the WMT Chair.

WMT will make a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation of all allegations of sexual or other harassment. Any employee who is determined, after an investigation, to have engaged in sexual harassment shall be subject to discipline, up to and including termination where warranted.

Subject to WMT's need to investigate claims of sexual or other harassment, such claims will remain confidential. All employees should act responsibly and truthfully in making allegations, responding to allegations, and providing information in an investigation. As provided by law, WMT will not retaliate against an employee for exercising their right to report harassment or for assisting in investigating a harassment allegation.

***12. Smoking Policy***

Because we wish to provide a healthy environment for all our staff, volunteers, and clients, smoking is prohibited throughout WMT's offices, and within 25 feet of its physical offices and entrance.

***13. Drug Free Workplace***

WMT is committed to the well-being of our employees, to the safety of the workplace, and to the provision of high-quality services to our customers. For all these reasons, we cannot, and do not, tolerate the unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, or dispensation of controlled substances in the workplace or on its premises at any time. Moreover, employees must come to work free from the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, and unlawfully used prescription medications.

Any employee who violates this Drug Free Workplace Policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

WMT reserves the right to conduct spontaneous drug tests at any time. Employees/contractors who refuse these tests when requested, may be dismissed.

***14. Software and Hardware Policy***

"End-user" is defined as any person using a WMT computer. "Software" is defined as any commercial, donated or public domain (e.g. "freeware" or "shareware") software program(s) and all computer files created, edited and stored by end-users when using these programs, including electronic mail messages. "Installation" is defined as the creating, decompressing, copying, configuration, downloading or any other method of installing software on computers.

"Computers" are defined as all network or workstation computers, including desktop and notebook computers. Computer Hardware includes, but is not limited to CPU's (network, desktop, notebook) monitors, printers, scanners, keyboards, RAM, disk drives (hard, diskette, CD-ROM and DVD-internal or external), modems, pointing devices, back-up power supplies, tape back-up units, internal expansion cards and chips (e.g. memory expansion), routers, electronic communication lines and services (for WAN, Internet and Intranet) and any other equipment, peripherals and add-ons not mentioned above.

All software installed on WMT computers is the property of WMT.

All computer files & folders will be backed up and stored offsite for safety purposes at least weekly; on every Friday if possible.

WMT and its employees must adhere to all current software program license provisions, including the number of licensed installations (computers or computer users) authorized under the software license. Use of unlicensed software programs is illegal. No unauthorized or unlicensed software programs are permitted on WMT computers.

***15. Restricting E-mail Policy***

Some job responsibilities at WMT require access to the Internet and the use of software. Only people appropriately authorized by WMT may use the Internet and E-mail.

Internet Usage

Internet use, on WMT time, is authorized primarily to conduct WMT business. Personal use of the Internet on WMT time may be allowable at the discretion of the ED but should be kept limited and not interfere with normal work responsibilities.

Internet use also brings the possibility of breaches to the security of confidential WMT information. Internet use creates the possibility of contamination of our system via viruses or spyware. Spyware allows unauthorized people, outside WMT, potential access to WMT passwords and other confidential information. For this reason, and to ensure the use of work time appropriately for work, we ask staff to limit Internet use.

Additionally, under no circumstances may WMT computers or other electronic equipment be used to obtain, view, or reach any pornographic, or otherwise immoral, unethical, or non-business-related Internet sites. Doing so can lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Specifically prohibited is the personal use of *any* “social network,” i.e., Twitter, My Space, Facebook, etc., using the computers of WMT

Email Usage at WMT

Email is also to be used primarily for WMT business. Limited personal use of e-mails is allowable if it does not interfere with the performance of one’s job responsibilities. WMT confidential information must never be shared outside of WMT, without authorization. You are also not to conduct personal business using WMT computers or email. Use/prohibition of any “social network” is outlined above.

Unauthorized Viewing

Viewing pornography, or sending pornographic jokes or stories via email, is considered sexual harassment, and will be addressed according to our sexual harassment policy.

Emails That Discriminate

Any emails that discriminate against employees by virtue of any protected classification including race, gender, nationality, religion, and so forth, will be dealt with according to the harassment policy.

These emails are prohibited at WMT. Sending or forwarding non-business emails will result in disciplinary action that may lead to employment termination.

WMT Owns Employee Email

Remember that WMT owns any communication sent via email or stored on WMT equipment. Management and other authorized staff have the right to access any material in your email or on your computer at any time. Please do not consider your electronic communication, storage, or access to be private if it is created or stored at work.