

Hiring Policy: Hiring Family Members

And Former Employees

Organizations can realize both benefits and problems by engaging in the practice of nepotism. As defined by Merriam-Webster, nepotism is favoritism based on kinship.

With organizations continually challenged to find qualified, competent employees who will fit the organizational culture, family referrals can be a way to fill positions. From an employee relations standpoint, depending on how prevalent nepotism is within the organization, unrelated employees may feel disadvantaged.

In Grand Traverse County where nepotism is common, policies and practices need to be clear and transparent. When family member hires or promotions are made, the reasons for these decisions need to be very clear and credible.

The policy below establishes rules for hiring family members and former employees.

Grand Traverse County is an equal opportunity employer and hires individuals based solely on their qualification and ability to do the job to be filled.

1. Grand Traverse County will consider a member of an employee's family for employment if the applicant possesses all the qualifications for employment for the position.

No person shall be hired, appointed, promoted, or transferred within the County departments where they have a close personal relationship, close business relationship, or are in any other way closely related to or dependent upon another employee, where one employee will be put in a position of direct and/or indirect supervision of the other. In addition, others, who, because of their position or customary involvement within the County will be prohibited from influencing or seeking favor and will be deemed in violation of this policy.

For purposes of this policy, "close personal relationship" may be, but is not limited to, natural, adoptive, step, foster, or by marriage in nature including spouse, child, parent, brother, sister, grandparent, grandchild, first cousin, aunt, uncle, niece and nephew, or any other person who resides in the same household as the employee.

2. Because of the risk of sexual harassment, employees who marry or become members of the same household may continue employment if there is not a) a direct or indirect supervisor/subordinate relationship between the employees or b) an actual conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Should one of the above situations occur, Grand Traverse County will attempt to find a suitable position within another a department to which one of the affected employees may transfer. If accommodations of this nature are not feasible, the affected employees will be permitted to determine which of them will resign their employment. If they do not choose, both employees shall be separated from County service.

3. Former employees who left the County in good standing may be considered for reemployment. Former employees who resigned without written notice or who were dismissed for disciplinary reasons may not be considered for reemployment.

A former employee who is reemployed will be considered a new employee from the date of reemployment.

Employees who retire may be eligible, in certain circumstances, to be considered for reemployment within the same department in the same capacity for a duration not to exceed six (6) months only for the purposes of training a new employee. Reemployed retired employees shall not be eligible for fringe benefits during this six (6) month period of reemployment.

Approved 5/87, amended 7/99, 12/00, 12/16

RESOLUTION # _____

WHEREAS, In an effort to achieve best-practices the County has begun reviews of operating policies and will be bringing those forward for Board approval at appropriate times; and

WHEREAS, The County's Hiring Policy regarding hiring family members and former employees was last reviewed and updated in December 2000 ; and

WHEREAS, The attached policy was updated with language to clarify rules for hiring family members and former employees and for Board appointments and is therefore being brought to the Board for approval; and

WHEREAS, In addition, effective 12/7/2016, employees which retire may be rehired for a period not to exceed six months in order to perform necessary training and will not be eligible for benefits during this time and an employee who is reemployed will be considered a new employee from the date of reemployment; and

WHEREAS, The policy will be implemented with any necessary coordination with Collective Bargaining Agreements.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Grand Traverse County Board of Commissioners approve the updated Hiring Policy as attached.