



Austin Economic Development Corporation

Personnel Policies & Employee Handbook



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1. Introduction to Austin Economic Development Corporation (AEDC)

1.a. Organizational History and Development

Through resolutions 20141211-122 and 20170216-040 the Austin City Council directed the City Manager to “deliver a feasibility study” and “bring forward...specific proposals” related to the creation of an economic development entity with the capacity to “create or support development of affordable housing, redevelopment, revitalization and other priority projects and goals of the City.” As City staff worked with an external consultant to prepare recommendations and working documents for the creation of an entity, Council provided additional direction to align the development of the economic development entity with the intent and creation of an “Austin Cultural Trust” through resolutions 20180215-082 and 20190808-072. In May 2020, Council further directed the City Manager to expedite a review of existing entities and resources that could be centralized to support the timely execution of recovery efforts that could secure or retain creative culture and community benefits in Resolutions 20200521-095 and 20200521-096.

Staff presented Recommendations for the creation of the AEDC. The recommendations include a proposed strategy for utilizing the AEDC, proposed funding and staffing options, as well as the recommended governance model that includes representation from other institutions across the community. With feedback from Council and community, staff brought forward action items to create the AEDC and to implement the strategy to utilize the AEDC. Those items included the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws which were approved in October 2020 for the creation of AEDC as a "family" of organizations with varying powers and authorities to advance partnerships within the community that secure equitable and inclusive outcomes from Austin's development and growth.

Council approved the first board of AEDC in February 2021 and approved the first Interlocal Agreement between the City and AEDC in June 2021 through Resolution 20210610-011. The interlocal further defines the role of AEDC as a public development partner to the City, with the option to partner with other public or private institutions in Austin, supporting economic development projects with cross-collaborative resources for the coordination of inclusive interests and outcomes across organizations. The founding documents broadly defined the organization's holistic mission with immediate priority elements from its intended program of work, generally outlining a range of initiatives from real estate transactions supportive of affordability and preservation.

2. Employment Practices

2.a. Values for AEDC Employment

The Austin Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) was created to advance partnerships within the community that secure equitable and inclusive development for all Austinites. Therefore, it is critical to the mission and essential to day-to-day operations for representatives of the organization to lend their own unique, lived-experiences while embracing, celebrating, and encouraging the lived-experiences of others in the shared pursuit of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Leadership of AEDC seeks to go beyond being an affirmative action and equal

opportunity employer by creating a team and workplace as open and inspiring as the outcomes the organization seeks to achieve for an inclusive Austin of the future.

2.b. Equal Employment Opportunity

When a position is open within the organization, it is a goal of leadership to select the most qualified person available for a position based on knowledge, skills, experience, ability to perform job requirements, and organizational fit. Staff will not discriminate against an employee or applicant for employment because of race, religion, sex, national origin, ethnicity, age, disabilities (so long as the individual is qualified for the job), sexual orientation, gender identity, color, marital status, veteran status or any other legally protected status in hiring, promotion, demotion, training, benefits, transfers, layoffs, terminations, recommendations, rates of pay, or other forms of compensation. Opportunity is provided to all employees based on qualifications, job requirements, and job performance. Further, leadership of the organization will balance business needs with equitable opportunities to enrich the employment experience within the organization.

2.c. At-Will Status

The organization is committed to mutually beneficial employment relationships that are both personal and voluntary but must also recognize that changing circumstances make it impossible to guarantee employment. An employee of the Corporation will be employed on an at-will basis, meaning that either the employee or the Corporation may terminate the employment relationship at any time for any reason, with or without notice. Employees acknowledge and agree that no terms of employment will be interpreted or construed to alter this at-will employment relationship or to confer on the employee any right with respect to continued employment by the Corporation for any specified duration. The voluntary, at-will nature of our employment relationship may not be changed except by a separate written agreement specifically entered for such purpose and signed by our Board chair.

2.d. Introduction Period

The Introductory Period for all employees is meant to provide you and AEDC with an opportunity to evaluate the working relationship. All employees will complete a minimum ninety (90) day Introductory Period; your supervisor may extend this period beyond ninety (90) days upon review. The Introductory Period begins with your orientation, which includes a handbook review and a review of your job description. The remainder of your Introductory Period is spent increasing your familiarity with the organization and adjusting your skills to your specific job. After ninety (90) days, you will participate in a performance review process with your supervisor.

The employee is not eligible to use but will accrue paid time off during the employee's Introductory Period. Any dates arranged before the start of employment or any foreseen, necessary absences should be presented to the manager on the first day of employment with AEDC and evidence of the manager's approval should be provided to the Chief Operating Officer (COO) in writing. These pre-arranged and any emergency dates or times requiring paid time off during this period will either be reduced from the balance of time accrued or will be deducted from the employee's pay.

The Introductory Period is not a period of guaranteed employment. Employment with AEDC is always at-will.

2.e. Exempt vs. Non-Exempt

All positions and employees are classified as either exempt or non-exempt, based on the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the type of work they perform. The job description associated with the position filled by the employee will indicate whether the position is Exempt or Non-Exempt. Exempt employees are paid on a salaried basis, and their salary is intended to constitute their entire compensation, regardless of the number of hours they work. Non-exempt employees perform work that does not meet the qualifications for exemption as defined by the FLSA. Non-exempt employees are generally paid by the hour and are entitled to two (2) 15-minute paid breaks and overtime pay for working over forty (40) hours in one workweek. Non-exempt employees are required to complete a time sheet each workweek but, by practice due to the nature of the work of the organization, all employees will complete a timesheet each workweek. The workweek is Sunday through Saturday.

Exempt employees must first obtain approval from his or her supervisor before working overtime. A failure to obtain approval before working overtime may result in disciplinary action being taken, up to and including termination from employment. The employee must completely and accurately record all hours worked, including overtime hours, even if the employee did not have approval to work such overtime. Employees are not permitted to complete timesheets for other employees.

2.f. Full-time, Part-time, Temporary and Independent Contractor

Full-time employees are those who are assigned a regular work schedule for 30 hours or more per workweek and whose assignment does not have a foreseeable or specified end date. Full-time employees are eligible for all employee benefits. Part-time employees are those who are assigned a regular work schedule of less than 30 hours per workweek and whose assignment does not have a foreseeable or specified end date. Part-time employees are eligible for legally mandated benefits and are not eligible for most employee benefits, unless otherwise specified. Temporary full-time or part-time employees are those who are assigned to work for a specified and limited period. Temporary employees are not eligible for employee benefits detailed in this handbook; however, temporary employees are eligible for legally mandated benefits such as workers' compensation insurance and state unemployment insurance. AEDC engages consultants and independent contractors from time to time. These individuals are not considered employees and are therefore ineligible for employee benefits, regardless of the length of the contractual relationship.

2.g. Internship, Exchange, and Study Programs

An individual actively enrolled in a post-secondary educational institution may be considered for an Internship, Exchange and/or Study program that is mutually beneficial for the organization and the student. The Internship, Exchange and/or Study Program is defined as one that has a specified beginning and end with clearly articulated learning objectives that align with the student's academic coursework and professional goals; provides a job description with desired qualifications and routine feedback from an experienced supervisor; offers a learning and applied knowledge experience that is an extension of the classroom; and offers skills development that is transferable to other employment settings. Since each Internship, Exchange and/or Study program has different requirements to support the goals and objectives of all parties, the individual will be classified as a Temporary employee of the organization. Compensation will be

determined during the selection process and, while the position is offered as At-Will employment, the position will be evaluated on a six-month basis unless authorized differently by the President and CEO for special needs or circumstances. The Internship, Exchange, and Study Programs may renew or continue for additional six-month period, but the individual will not maintain this status or remain in this role beyond two years. In all cases, AEDC will prioritize schoolwork above that of the organizations and supervisors will occasionally request to review the student's current grades, while providing mentorship and making best-faith efforts to support the student getting the appropriate level of credit from the post-secondary institution in which they are enrolled.

2.h. Job Description

Job descriptions are designed to give prospective employees an understanding of the nature of an open position and facilitate the recruitment process. Additionally, they serve as guidelines for employees already working in established positions. Job descriptions are not exhaustive documents, and employees may be asked to perform additional duties to help meet organizational needs. As part of the orientation process, employees will receive a job description consistent with language posted during the hiring process for the position. The document should be thoroughly read for any immediate questions that should be directed to the supervisor, as the document will be reviewed and discussed with the supervisor at the beginning and completion of the introductory period. Employees are encouraged to offer suggestions for improving overall effectiveness and the design of the position by speaking regularly with the supervisor, the COO, and/or the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) as needed, subject to AEDC's business needs

2.i. Background Check and Use of References

AEDC directly or indirectly conducts periodic background checks on all potential employees. The type of information that can be collected includes, but is not limited to, a criminal background check, education, employment history, and professional and personal references. AEDC will ensure that all background checks are held in compliance with applicable federal and state statutes, such as the Fair Credit Reporting Act. However, as part of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, this information cannot be used as a basis for denying employment, unless it is determined to be job-related. AEDC reserves the right to make the sole determination concerning information or any employment decision arising out of the background check.

2.j. Confidentiality

It is the policy of AEDC that the Board of Directors and employees of AEDC may not disclose, divulge, or make accessible confidential information belonging to, or obtained through their affiliation with AEDC to any person, including relatives, friends, and business and professional associates, other than to persons who have a legitimate need for such information and to whom AEDC has authorized disclosure. The Board of Directors and employees shall use confidential information solely for the purpose of performing services as a Board member or employee for AEDC. This policy is not intended to prevent disclosure where disclosure is required by law. The Board of Directors, employees, volunteers, and contractors must always exercise good judgment and care to avoid unauthorized or improper disclosures of confidential information. All members of the organization operating under requests for confidentiality should be sensitive to the risk of inadvertent disclosure in all settings. Board members and employees will receive a copy of the Ethics, Conflict and Non-Disclosure Policy (Addendum __) (the "Ethics Policy") A signed copy for

execution is required before the start of service to AEDC. Incoming employees should thoroughly read the document and discuss questions or concerns with the supervisor at any point during employment.

2.k. Use of Confidential Information

Employees shall not, at any time whether during or after employment, use, disclose, or otherwise misappropriate confidential information about AEDC obtained by reason of their employment with intent to cause harm to the organization and/or financial gain to themselves or unfair advantage for other individuals or organizations. At the end of service, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, all employees must return all documents, papers, and other materials, regardless of medium (including on personal electronic devices, email accounts, social media accounts, text messages, business contacts, or cloud-based storage services or facilities), which may contain or be derived from AEDC's confidential information, in their possession, custody, or control.

2.l. Conflict of Interest

AEDC employees shall faithfully discharge their duties and shall refrain from knowingly engaging in any outside matters of financial interest incompatible with the impartial, objective, and effective performance of their duties. They shall not realize personal gain in any form that would influence improperly the conduct of their AEDC duties. They shall not knowingly use AEDC property, funds, position, or power for personal or political gain. They shall promptly inform their supervisors in writing of reasonably foreseen potential conflicts and shall complete a Conflict-of-Interest form on an annual basis (when creating annual evaluation documents for forthcoming year). Conduct by an employee that violates the AEDC's policies, regulations or rules pertaining to conflict of interest is a serious matter and may lead to disciplinary action. Expectations are in line with the Ethics Policy (Addendum ____).

2.m. Outside Business Interests, Secondary and/or Simultaneous Employment of Personnel

An employee's outside employment or business activities and interests must not interfere with the employee's regular duties nor represent a conflict of interest. Employees may hold outside jobs in unrelated businesses or occupations if the employee meets the performance standards of their position and the employee's supervisor provides approval before employment or at the time of outside employment or business is undertaken. Unless an alternative work schedule has been approved, employees will be subject to AEDC scheduling demands, regardless of any existing outside work assignments. AEDC's office space, equipment and materials are not to be used for purposes related to outside employment.

Further, when employees consult, lecture, counsel, or advise outside individuals or agencies as a representative of AEDC, all fees, donations, or cash honoraria must be paid to the organization. It is the policy of AEDC to permit outside consulting activities that: are related to the professional interest and development of the exempt person; do not interfere with regular duties; do not utilize AEDC materials, facilities or resources; do not compete with the work of AEDC, and are not otherwise contrary to the best interest of AEDC; do not violate federal or state law; and, do not represent a conflict of interest under other policies of AEDC.

2.n. Employment of Relatives and/or Business with Family

Due to potential for perceived or actual conflicts, such as favoritism or personal conflicts from outside the work environment, which can be carried into the daily working relationship, the Corporation will hire or consider other employment actions concerning relatives of persons currently employed only if: candidates for employment will not be working directly for or supervising a family member, and candidates for employment will not occupy a position in the same line of authority in which employees can initiate or participate in decisions involving a direct benefit to the family member. Such decisions include hiring, retention, transfer, promotion, wages and leave requests. This policy applies to all current employees and candidates for employment. “Family member” is defined as one of the following: relationships by blood—parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, brother, sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece and first cousin; and relationships by marriage—spouse/partner (as defined by applicable law), step-parent, step-child, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, father-in-law, mother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, half-brother, half-sister, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, spouse/partner of any of the above and co-habiting couples or significant others.

2.o. Employee Protection (Whistleblower) Policy

If any employee reasonably believes in good faith that some policy, practice, or activity of AEDC is in violation of the law, the employee must file a written complaint with the Chief Operating Officer (COO), the CEO, or the Board Chair. It is the intent of AEDC to adhere to all laws and regulations that apply to the organization and the purpose of this policy is to support the organization’s goal of legal compliance. The support of all employees is necessary to achieving compliance with various laws and regulations. An employee is protected from retaliation only if the employee brings the alleged unlawful activity, policy, or practice to the attention of AEDC in good faith and provides a reasonable opportunity to investigate and correct the alleged unlawful activity. The protection described below is only available to employees that comply with this requirement. AEDC will not retaliate against an employee who, in good faith, has made a protest or raised a complaint against some practice of AEDC, or of another individual or entity with whom AEDC has a business relationship, based on a reasonable belief that the practice is a violation of the law. AEDC will not retaliate against employees who disclose or threaten to disclose to a supervisor or a public body, any activity, policy, or practice of AEDC that the employee reasonably believes is in violation of the law, or a rule, or regulation mandated pursuant to law or is in violation of a clear mandate of public policy concerning the health, safety, welfare, or protection of the environment.

3. Compensation and Benefits

The primary objective of our compensation program is to attract and retain talented and dedicated employees. Compensation levels are reviewed periodically and are designed to reflect competitiveness and equity based on internal and external factors affecting a quasi-public, non-profit organization. AEDC evaluates employees’ pay in relation to comparable salaries in similar positions inside the organization and other quasi-public, non-profits in comparable labor markets, as well as AEDC’s budget capabilities. If you have questions or concerns about your pay level, you are encouraged to speak with your supervisor and/or COO.

3.a. Pay Periods and Payroll

AEDC operates with payroll scheduled for every other Friday and requires all employees to be paid through direct deposit. Employees are required to include and maintain direct deposit information in their AEDC account with Gusto. Please notify your supervisor and/or the COO if you experience any issues using the Gusto platform or any issues that you anticipate disrupting your ability to securely receive payroll via direct deposit. AEDC may not have the ability to address any issue that emerges on and/or after the Wednesday before a Friday on which pay is distributed.

3.b. Overtime Pay

Non-exempt employees are paid at the rate of one and one-half (1.5) times their regular rate of pay for hours worked more than 40 hours in a workweek. Overtime is not at the employee's discretion; it requires advance approval by your supervisor and the COO. Any unauthorized overtime can result in disciplinary action. AEDC does not provide compensatory time off as a substitute for overtime pay for non-exempt employees. Vacation, sick, holiday, bereavement and other paid time off do not constitute hours worked for the purposes of computing overtime.

3.c. Wage Garnishments

From time to time, the organization may be required to withhold monies from an employee's pay. If this organization receives a court-authorized garnishment or levy, the employee affected will be notified.

3.d. Wellness Benefits

The policies and procedures in this section of the handbook are intended to provide employees with an understanding of the benefits available to AEDC employees. All benefits offered to employees are subject to AEDC's sole discretion and may be changed, altered, limited, or eliminated at any time. Further, all benefits offered to employees are governed by and administered and implemented in accordance with the plans, procedures, and policies associated with such benefits. Full-time employees are eligible for medical, dental, vision, life/accidental death coverage through our group insurance plans. Details related to each plan will be provided to the employee at the start of employment with AEDC and the employee is expected to make selections and maintain participation through their individual account in Gusto. Part-time employees are generally not eligible to apply. If at any time you should have questions about your benefits, please contact your supervisor or the COO.

3.d.1. Medical. AEDC believes that our employees should have access to medical insurance coverage. We strive to provide eligible employees with adequate, affordable health care benefits and work in partnership with our health care providers to ensure access for all eligible employees. An eligible AEDC employee may elect to enroll in AEDC's medical insurance plan and may elect to pay for health insurance coverage for their spouse and/or dependents at the employee's expense. Employee's and any spouse and/or dependent coverage premiums will be automatically deducted from the employee's paychecks. The employee will select and manage options through their individual account in Gusto. There is no waiting period for eligible AEDC employees to begin taking advantage of the medical benefit plan unless mandated by the specific benefit plan.

3.d.2. Dental. Eligible AEDC employees may elect to enroll in AEDC's dental insurance plan and may elect to pay for dental insurance coverage for their spouse and/or dependents at the

employee's expense. Employee's and any spouse and/or dependent coverage premiums will be automatically deducted from the employee's paychecks. The employee will select and manage options through their individual account in Gusto. There is no waiting period for eligible AEDC employees to begin taking advantage of the dental benefit plan unless mandated by the specific benefit plan.

3.d.3. Vision. Eligible AEDC employees may elect to enroll in AEDC's vision insurance plan and may elect to pay for vision insurance coverage for their spouse and/or dependents at the employee's expense. Employee's and any spouse and/or dependent coverage premiums will be automatically deducted from the employee's paychecks. The employee will select and manage options through their individual account in Gusto. There is no waiting period for eligible AEDC employees to begin taking advantage of the vision benefit plan unless mandated by the specific benefit plan.

3.d.4. Life. Eligible AEDC employees may elect to enroll in AEDC's life insurance plan. Employee's premiums will be automatically deducted from the employee's paychecks. The employee will select and manage options through their individual account in Gusto. There is no waiting period for eligible AEDC employees to begin taking advantage of the life insurance plan unless mandated by the specific benefit plan.

3.e. Insurance Continuation

Upon voluntary or involuntary termination, employees covered under a medical insurance plan in the State of Texas with less than 20 employees have certain legal rights to remain on the insurance plan at their own expense for up to nine (9) months (more in some exceptional cases) through State Continuation of Benefits. The employee will select and manage options related to continuation of insurance through their individual account in Gusto, which will remain active for a period following termination.

3.f. Retirement Contribution

Eligible AEDC employees may elect to enroll and contribute to a 401K Retirement plan in which they received regular contributions through the Corporation. All retirement benefits offered to employees are subject to AEDC's sole discretion and may be changed, altered, limited, or eliminated at any time. Further, all benefits offered to employees are governed by and administered and implemented in accordance with the plans, procedures, and policies associated with such benefits. Full-time employees are eligible for retirement through our group 401K provider/plans. Details and options will be provided to the employee at the start of employment with AEDC and the employee is expected to make selections and maintain participation through their individual account in Gusto. Part-time employees are generally not eligible to apply. If at any time you should have questions about your benefits, please contact your supervisor or the COO.

4. Employee Leave, Office Closures and Time Management

The policies and procedures outlined in this section of the handbook are intended to provide employees with an overview of the employee paid leave practices at AEDC. The primary objective of our leave, closure and time management practices are to support wellness, safety and work/life balance that not only retain talented and dedicated employees but help them to thrive. All are reviewed periodically and are designed to reflect competitiveness and equity based on internal and external factors affecting a quasi-public, non-profit organization. AEDC evaluates employees' leave to comparable policies in similar positions inside the organization and other quasi-public,

non-profits in comparable labor markets, as well as AEDC's budget capabilities. If you have questions or concerns about your leave, office closures and time management, you are encouraged to speak with your supervisor and/or COO.

4.a. Accrual of Paid Time Off

Non-exempt employees accrue certain amounts of vacation and wellness leave as specified below, at the completion of each pay period. Consistent with the above, Section 2.d., the employee is not eligible to use but will accrue paid time off during the employee's Introductory Period. Any emergency requiring paid time off during this period will either be reduced from the balance of time accrued or will be deducted from the employee's pay. Based on the level of the position stated in the job description, unless stated otherwise and approved by the President and CEO, employees will accrue the following leave amounts at the completion of each pay period: Eight (8) hours Wellness Leave and Eight (8) hours Vacation Leave. The unused balance of accrued time will be carried into the next fiscal year.

4.b. Holidays

The Austin Economic Development Corporation recognizes the following holidays and days of observance. Unless special circumstances are approved by the President and CEO, the typical holiday calendar for the calendar year will include the following:

- New Year's Day
- Martin Luther King Day
- Presidents' Day
- Memorial Day
- Juneteenth
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Veterans Day
- Indigenous Peoples Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Thanksgiving Friday
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

In honor of the diversity and equity our organization seeks to lend through our work in the community for inclusive outcomes, it is critical to the mission and essential to day-to-day operations for employees of the organization to have the ability to embrace, observe, and celebrate their personal religious and cultural practices. Employees will receive sixteen (16) hours of personal holiday pay each year. These hours must be used in eight (8) hour blocks or in consecutive increments within one work week. To the extent that modifications in work schedules do not interfere with the efficient accomplishment of AEDC's mission and work program, an employee may be permitted to receive an adequate amount of time off in observance of a shared and common religious and/or cultural period. If you would like to request holiday leave outside of the regular schedule, please contact your supervisor or the COO. Holiday pay will not be provided, in any circumstances for any level of employment, but the employee may request to

flex the time worked with other work hours within the work/pay period or the following work/pay period.

4.c. Vacation Leave

Leadership of AEDC encourages employees to take vacation time to refresh and to ensure the high quality of their work. Unless stated otherwise, the request for use of vacation leave should be submitted to your supervisor in writing at least two weeks in advance. The Company will consider requests for Vacation Leave usage, in its sole discretion, in light of the business and scheduling needs of the Company and the individual employee's performance and attendance history. Unapproved leave may result in disciplinary action, penalty and/or termination. Vacation leave consisting of 80+ consecutive hours must be approved by the President and CEO and should be requested in writing at least 4 weeks in advance.

Employees may be paid, in the sole discretion of the Company in light of the business and financial needs and condition of the Company, for the balance of accrued, unused Vacation Leave, up to 80 hours, upon resignation for good reason or termination without cause, if the former employee is on good terms and in good standing with the organization upon and following the departure process. For purposes of this Section 4.c. only, "good reason" means a reduction of the employee's base salary of at least ten percent (except where the base salaries of other similarly situated employees are likewise reduced, as approved by the Company's Board); a materially adverse change in the employee's authority, duties, or responsibilities (except where such change is made for all other similarly situated employees, as approved by the Company's Board); the Company's instruction to the employee to take an unlawful action; or the Company's uncured breach of any contract between the Company and the employee. For purposes of this Section 4.c. only, "cause" means the employee's uncured breach of any contract between the Company and the employee; the employee's failure or refusal to provide adequate performance; the employee's breach of any Company policy; the employee's commission or conviction of (or guilty or nolo contender plea) of a felony or other crime that is harmful to the Company; the employee's fraud, embezzlement, bribery, dishonesty or theft; the employee's authorized use, misappropriation, destruction or diversion of Company assets or property; or Employee's use of illegal drugs or abuse of alcohol or prescription drugs that precludes the employee's ability to perform Employee's duties adequately.

4.d. Wellness Leave

The leadership of the organization seeks to build and uphold a holistic work environment that supports wellness, safety and a level of work/life balance that not only retains talented and dedicated employees but help each to thrive, personally and professionally. Hours accrued for Wellness Leave is inclusive of sick and personal leave. An employee may use their wellness hours for personal activities related to self-care, sicknesses, and/or mental health needs, as well as for the sickness of an immediate family member in their care, such as a child, parent, or spouse. Please notify your supervisor as soon as you know that you plan to use Wellness hours and please have a discussion with your supervisor if you would like to thread the use of Wellness hours into your regular work schedule. AEDC reserves the right to request documentation from a physician or other licensed healthcare provider for Wellness Leave of three (3) or more workdays and in situation(s) where there is a pattern of suspicious absences and/or AEDC believes Wellness Leave

is being abused. Employees will not be paid for accrued, unused Wellness Leave upon any termination or other separation from employment.

4.e. Sabbatical Leave

Sabbatical leave is paid leave that is separate from Vacation and Wellness Leave but applies only to long-term employees of AEDC. The organization offers Sabbatical Leave as a benefit to encourage our employees to use time to innovate, gain knowledge and pursue their personal and professional interests (i.e., participation in fellowship or exchange programs, volunteer, growth-oriented travel, research, write, etc.) and is seen as one way to reward tenured employees – those that have worked for AEDC for at least five (5) consecutive years. The organization's Sabbatical Leave offers eligible employees up to four (4) work weeks of paid leave every five (5) years. Every five (5) years following the first five (5) year term, sabbatical leave is increased by one (1) paid week with a cap at eight (8) work weeks. Employees will be eligible to take sabbaticals once every five (5) years until voluntary or involuntary termination.

The paid leave is compensated at the following rates:

- First five-year sabbatical – 60% of salary
- Second five-year sabbatical – 70% of salary
- Third five-year sabbatical and beyond – 75% of salary

Sabbatical Leave is not paid upon any termination or other separation from employment, it cannot be accrued, and it does not carry over or roll from year-to-year or from one five (5) year period to another. For example, if you become eligible after five (5) years of working with AEDC, you should take sabbatical before you complete ten (10) years or you will lose the initial allotment. The full number of days do not have to be used, but the days used must be used consecutively. Sabbatical Leave can be coupled with that year's funding for the employee's professional development if it is deemed by the supervisor to be supportive of the same type of professional development initially discussed or planned with the supervisor and pre-approved by the President and CEO. While on Sabbatical Leave employees may also engage in paid activities or opportunities that are in line with **Addendum _____**, AEDC's Ethics Policy.

In all cases, should the employee request to take Sabbatical Leave, they must submit a request with a brief proposal to their supervisor describing ideas, plans and growth-oriented objectives. Plans should be discussed with the supervisor at least three (2) months in advance of leave and the final request should be submitted to the supervisor within four (4) work weeks before leave. After the employee's sabbatical ends, they will be expected to report and share results. Anything you accomplish related to your job during your leave will be intellectual property of the organization. Results of activities that are unrelated to the employee's job (e.g. writing a book, taking up new projects, creating new products) belong to the employee.

While you are on a Sabbatical Leave, your employment status, contract and benefits (e.g. health insurance) remain intact. AEDC will inform you promptly about any unforeseen or organizational changes. The employee should expect to return to their position (or an equivalent position) at the end of the sabbatical. If organization needs to lay off employees while they are on sabbatical, the legal and agreed upon requirements for notice and severance pay will be followed and employees

will be advised on the matter in a timely manner. The employee is not required to return work equipment while on sabbatical but is still held to all policies associated with employment at the Austin Economic Development Corporation.

4.f. Jury Duty, Witness Duty, Voting

If you receive a proposed juror questionnaire or are called as a witness in a legal proceeding, please notify your supervisor. Please keep your supervisor informed of your jury duty or witness status. On days when you serve less than a full day at court, contact your supervisor to determine whether you should return to work. When you return from serving as a juror or witness, you may be asked to furnish your supervisor or the COO with appropriate documentation. AEDC follows Texas Employment Code for guidelines. Employees unable to vote outside of working hours will be provided two (2) hours of paid civic leave to cast votes. Hourly employees: whether the employees are classified as part-time or full-time, Texas Employment Law requires payment only for the time an hourly employee works.

4.g. Bereavement Leave

Bereavement Leave of up to three (3) days with pay is provided to exempt and non-exempt employees in the event of a death of someone of extreme significance in your life. Should you have the need for additional time in observance of a shared and common religious or cultural practice associated with bereavement, please discuss and make a request through your supervisor or the COO. Leadership will be as flexible as possible in accommodating your leave requests. Employees seeking time off for Bereavement Leave have the responsibility of communicating with their supervisor about leave arrangements. Special circumstances and arrangements may be considered but ultimately must be authorized by the President and CEO in the event of someone's death from within the employee's immediate family (spouse and/or child) or household.

4.h. Maternity, Paternity, and Adoption Leave

Maternity, Paternity, and Adoption Leave under this policy is a leave associated with the birth of an employee's own child or the placement of a child with the employee in connection with adoption. A full-time employee may take up to twelve (12) weeks away from AEDC for Maternity, Paternity, and/or Adoption Leave. Maternity, Paternity, and Adoption Leave is not charged against the employee's other leave credits, and the number of paid days received is six (6) weeks (30 working days). The paid leave is compensated at the following rate:

- After one full year of service – 60% of salary
- After three full years of service – 70% of salary
- After five full years of service – 75% of salary

Additionally, an employee may use any available wellness or vacation leave for the twelve (12) week period, compensated at 100% of salary. While an employee is on paid Maternity, Paternity, and Adoption leave, AEDC's contribution for health and other benefits shall be maintained by AEDC. If applicable, arrangements will need to be made for employees to pay their dependent premiums while on unpaid maternity, paternity, and adoption leave. The employee must provide the COO 30 days' notice of the requested leave (or as much notice as practicable if the leave is not foreseeable). An exception for extended coverage, without pay, may be made with the

approval of the President and CEO. Every effort will be made to allow you to return to your former position. In some instances, it may not be possible to hold the employee's position open. Consideration will be given for the first available opening in a comparable position.

4.i. Military Leave

If you are an active member of the National Guard or military reserves and are directed to participate in periodic field training, you will receive unpaid Military Leave for a maximum period of fifteen (15) calendar days a year. To support the employment through their transition of service, AEDC will provide up to three (3) days paid leave before or following leave for the active or reserve service member. Such leave will have no impact on the employee's regular vacation and/or wellness accrual. If you have some choice as to when to attend yearly training, leadership asks that you consider the mission, objectives, and work program of the organization to select a period that will be convenient for the organization and for your coworkers. AEDC will comply with federal and state law with respect to active-duty military service.

Spouses and parents of those active and reserve members of the military are eligible for up to three (3) days paid leave to support the transition of the household at the beginning or end of a member's service, in any capacity. To be eligible for this leave, the employee's spouse, child, or parent must be a member of the Armed Forces of the United States (including National Guard or Reserves) on leave from field training, deployment or returning from field training or deployment.

4.j. Inclement Weather and/or Emergency Office Closure

Unless specified differently by the President and CEO in certain circumstances, AEDC will follow the direction of the City of Austin when closing for inclement weather events. Upon direction from the President and CEO, the COO will execute the emergency closure calling tree – where all supervisors will promptly text then call direct reports to direct and instruct on Inclement Weather and/or Emergency Closure(s). If an employee has concerns related to closures, is anticipating such closure, and/or awaiting direction, each should check the City of Austin website for notifications of late start or closure and follow any directives that the City provides for its employees. Should the employee live outside of the City of Austin, they should consult the terms of the area in which they live and provide notice to their supervisor if there are conflicts.

Further, should the City of Austin (or the governing authority outside of the City in which the employee resides) not issue terms of closure for inclement weather but a School District (in which the employee's child or children participates) does issue terms of closure, the employee is provided up to two (2) hours of paid time to make the appropriate arrangements or request additional time from their supervisor or the COO.

4.k. Timesheets

Completed and approved timesheets are required of all employees. Once you are assigned an email and Outlook account at the start of employment with the organization, you will receive a template timesheet with detailed instructions and a calendar reminder to submit your approved timesheet by end of day on Mondays before payday. Providing the completed timesheet in a timely manner for the supervisor's review and approval is the responsibility of the employee. The supervisor is then responsible for providing approved timesheets to the COO by end of day on Mondays before payday. Employees that anticipate being out of the office on the days' timesheets

are due should coordinate with their supervisor in advance. If you are unexpectedly out of office and unable to provide your completed timesheet to your supervisor, your supervisor may provide a general copy for processing payroll, but you are expected and required to submit a completed timesheet immediately upon return to work. Failure to submit appropriate documentation in a timely manner may result in disciplinary action, penalty, and or termination.

4.l. **Personal and Professional Calendar**

The proper management of staff time is critical to the organization's work program and leadership's desire to support our team's holistic wellbeing and work/life balance. Once you are assigned an email and Outlook account at the start of employment with the organization, you are expected to populate, update in real time, and manage an open calendar that is inclusive of meetings, blocked time for specified work, time in and out of office, Vacation or Wellness Leave, etc. The timesheet includes all days within the pay period - **ALL actual time worked should be accurately and completely tracked and reported on the timesheet.** It is preferred that you use this Outlook calendar for all professional matters and those personal matters that impact your availability during typical work hours. Details for personal appointments or calendar items may be hidden with the time indicating the employee is "Unavailable" for everyone's reference. This helps the team to manage their needs and expectations, but it also allows the team to respect your needs and time away from work. Your supervisor should always have access to your up-to-date calendar and all employees of the organization who operate with coded time for project work/management should post coded and project specific details in ¼ hour increments on their calendar to allow their supervisor to collect and report the time as needed.

4.m. **Flexing Time**

Due to the nature of the organization's work and relationships in the community in which it serves, there is a strong likelihood that some required work activities will either extend beyond the regular work hours and/or may take place on days that are outside of the regular workweek. Actual time worked should be tracked and reported on the timesheet. Full-time, exempt employees of the Austin Economic Development Corporation are eligible to "flex" up to eight (8) hours per pay period. Time flexed should equate to the amount of time worked outside of the regular workday and workweek, up to the eight (8) hour cap. Flexing time must be approved with the supervisor and accurately and completely reported on the employee's timesheet.

5. **Workplace Environment**

The policies and procedures in this section provide employees with an understanding of appropriate workplace behavior. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your supervisor or the COO.

5.a. **Hours of Operation and Work Schedules**

Work schedules at AEDC are based on individual job responsibilities and may vary from employee to employee. All schedules are subject to change and require supervisor approval. Employees should maintain a regular work schedule including the hours of 9:00am to 5:00pm, Monday through Friday. Evening and weekend events may require employees to work outside of AEDC's regular work schedule. Alternative work schedules may be proposed by the employee to their supervisor but will require approval from the supervisor and COO. Efficiencies of the alternative schedule will be evaluated to either alter or reauthorize the schedule after each six (6) month period. The supervisor and COO maintain the ability to revoke the alternative work schedule at

any time for any reason and will provide the employee reasonable time to adjust to the regular work schedule.

5.b. Teleworking

All employees of the Corporation currently work outside of a traditional office environment. While facilities are available to work, meet regularly and host individual meetings are available, each employee is expected to telework from a location within the Austin region (Travis County and counties contiguous to Travis). If prior approval is provided by the supervisor, employees may work from locations outside of the Austin region, but the employee must be available during the organization's regular hours of operation. The employee must be accessible via computer, phone, email, and any other channel typically used by staff to meet, communicate, and share work. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that the proper working conditions and infrastructure exists to support this level of accessibility and to work with the supervisor should there be any issues or needs. Failure to be accessible and/or operational as agreed may result in disciplinary action, penalty and or termination.

5.c. Attire and Appearance

AEDC maintains a casual work setting and strives to reflect the people and culture(s) of the place it serves, Austin. Employees should maintain personal hygiene and should dress appropriately for the audience(s) they are joining. It is expected that employees will maintain a clean and neat appearance and will project a professional and business-like image in dealing with other employees, clients, and the public. Employees will be notified by their supervisor, COO or the President and COO if there is a special need for specific attire in a reasonable amount of time to comply with the will and direction of leadership.

5.d. Workplace Conduct

All employees at AEDC should exhibit personal and professional integrity in all activities. Generally, treating others with respect, kindness, consideration, and maintaining open, ongoing communication with your supervisor and coworkers will create a basis for a successful work experience. It is the obligation and responsibility of each employee at AEDC to work on resolving problems and conflicts by focusing on solutions, keeping issues work-related (as opposed to personal), and communicating directly with the person or persons with whom you have a conflict. If employees are unable to resolve conflict working person to person, then each employee's supervisor should become involved to resolve the dispute. Employees who feel the conflict is being caused or created due to conduct in violation of AEDC's harassment policy (below) should follow the reporting procedures in that policy. Employees can work best in an environment in which it is healthy, efficient, safe, and nurturing. It is expected that every employee will keep their work area and the common areas organized and clean.

5.e. Internal Communications

Leadership of AEDC values the importance of functioning as a team of professionals and believes that frequent, open communication of information about our operations, programs, and activities is an essential ingredient in maintaining a productive working environment. To encourage understanding and dialogue about our organization and its employees, we support a variety of options to facilitate communication including personal meetings and e-mail. We expect you to read published, posted, and e-mailed information and to attend meetings to keep informed of

our activities and opportunities available to you. When sending individualized messages or distributing messages to a larger audience, you are asked to do so in a professional and courteous manner. Timely and attentive participation at regularly scheduled staff meetings is required, and we discourage the use of computers during these meetings, aside from scheduling functions or quick actions that may take less than one minute, to keep the focus on the team and its conversation.

Unless deemed appropriate by the President and CEO, internal communications including members of the Board of Directors should be sent from the President and CEO. In all cases that members of the Board of Directors are included on communications from AEDC, correspondence should be sent in a manner that avoids an actual and/or perceived quorum or walking quorum.

5.f. Texas Public Information/Open Records Act and Open Meeting Act

The Texas Public Information Act was originally known as the Texas Open Records Act, approved by the Legislature in 1973, detailed in [Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code](#). The Austin Economic Development Corporation is a quasi-governmental, non-profit agency that has further adopted the values of transparency from our creating and nominating bodies and must be compliant with the Public Information Act and Open Meetings Act. Public information refers to information collected, assembled, produced, or maintained while transacting public business. It may be on paper or film or in electronic communications such as emails, Internet postings, text messages or instant messages. Some information is not open to the public. These types of information are listed as exceptions in the Texas Public Information Act. They include some information in personnel records, pending litigation, competitive bids, trade secrets, real estate deals and certain legal matters involving attorney-client privilege. Attorneys' fees paid by a governmental body are generally public.

Filing a request under the Texas Public Information Act is as simple as asking the government agency in writing for the desired information. The request can be made through a letter or via email or fax directly to staff of the organization. AEDC provides instructions, a template, and a portal to collect Requests for Public Information (www.austinedc.org/public-information). Employees receiving an inquiry that could be interpreted as a Public Information Request should immediately review the correspondence with their supervisor and/or the COO. The governmental body is not allowed to ask why the information is being requested.

Public information is supposed to be released "promptly." There is a misconception that a governmental body or agency has 10 days to release information. The 10-day mark is the deadline for a governmental body, if it contends the information is not public, to ask for an attorney general's decision allowing it to withhold the records. (Texas' open records law is stronger than those in many other states in that if a governmental entity wants to withhold information, it must ask the attorney general for permission to do so.) After a ruling is sought, the attorney general then decides within 45 days. The person making the original request can also offer written comments to the attorney general. If a governmental body fails to seek an attorney general decision in time, the information is presumed to be public.

5.g. Respectfully Open-Door Policy

AEDC has an open-door policy... with a bit of a caveat. All employees are asked to consider the personal space and boundaries of their supervisors and co-workers and the efficiency of the

organization. Leadership encourages time blocking on calendars, signage or closed doors when trying to limit interruptions, and emailing or messaging ahead of the drop-in so your colleagues can be physically and mentally prepared to pause and make the most of the connection.

Leadership acknowledges that accessibility is fundamental to the team. This policy also encourages employees who have job-related problems or complaints to talk them over with their supervisor, the COO and/or the CEO. Leadership of AEDC believes that employee concerns are best addressed through timely informal and open communication. The organization will attempt to keep all such expressions of concern, their investigation, and the terms of their resolution confidential. However, while investigating and resolving concerns, some dissemination of information to others may be appropriate. No employee will be disciplined or otherwise penalized for raising a concern in good faith.

5.h. Drug-Free, Alcohol-Free, and Smoke-Free Work Environments

AEDC believes that all employees have a right to work in a drug-free and alcohol-free environment. Use of these stimulants while on the job may pose serious safety and health risks. Accordingly, employees may not use or be under the influence of drugs or alcohol while performing work for AEDC. The only exception to this rule is when alcohol is included as part of an office celebration or event. However, when drinking at an event, employees are reminded that they are representatives of AEDC and as such should drink responsibly. If this exception is abused, the employee may be subject to disciplinary action, penalty and/or termination. Consuming alcohol at such work-related functions or events is done at the employees own discretion, therefore the employee assumes all risk and AEDC is not responsible for any actions of the employee.

5.i. Anti-Harassment Policy

AEDC is committed to maintaining high standards of professional conduct in the work environment, inclusive of in-person, virtual and or teleworking settings in which professional decorum is expected. In keeping with this commitment, the organization strongly prohibits any form of harassment, which would have the effect of creating a threatening, uncomfortable, or hostile work environment.

Definition of Unlawful Sexual Harassment

- Specifically, sexual harassment in the workplace includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature by any employee where:
- Submission to such conduct is either an express or implied term or condition of employment; or
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment-related decisions such as hiring, promotion, performance evaluations, pay adjustment, discipline, work assignments, etc.; or
- Such conduct creates an offensive, intimidating, or hostile work environment that unreasonably interferes with work performance.

Examples of such conduct include: display of sexually-suggestive calendars or pictures, off-color language, jokes, cartoons, nicknames, propositions, email messages, repeated unwanted social invitations or gifts, crude gestures, suggestive or insulting comments or sounds, whistling or leering, or unwelcome touching.

Even conduct that is not overtly sexual in nature may create a hostile environment. Any unequal treatment of an employee that would not occur but for the employee's gender may, if severe and pervasive, constitute a hostile environment. To rise to the level of a "hostile work environment" behavior must be severe, pervasive and directed toward a person based on a protected characteristic. Such conduct is prohibited. Whether or not such conduct constitutes unlawful hostile environment sexual harassment is based on the totality of the circumstances.

Other Discriminatory Harassment

In general, ethnic or racial slurs and other verbal or physical conduct relating to a person's protected characteristics may constitute harassment when they unreasonably interfere with the person's performance or create an intimidating or hostile environment. Such conduct is prohibited.

Procedure for Reporting Unlawful Discrimination or Harassment

AEDC has made an affirmative commitment to a neutral, unbiased investigation process for all complaints of unlawful harassment in accordance with applicable law. Any employee who believes that such employee or any other employee has been the victim of unlawful discrimination or harassment, should immediately report such conduct to their supervisor, or to another member of AEDC management, such as the COO. This policy applies to all employees, full-time and part-time, and to actions by co-workers and members of management, as well, independent contractors, vendors, and business invitees of AEDC. Under no circumstances will an employee be required to file a complaint with a harassing supervisor.

AEDC has more than one way for employees to report discrimination or harassment:

- Make a complaint to your supervisor; or
- If that is not appropriate or would cause discomfort, call, email or come see another member of AEDC management, such as the COO;

AEDC cannot begin to investigate, and to keep our environment free from harassment and discrimination, if employees do not report violations of these policies. In every case, please help AEDC by being prepared to provide the following preliminary information: the nature of the complaint, including time, location and specific conduct of concern; the identity of the parties, including witnesses; a good time and the best phone number or location for us to communicate with you.

All complaints will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. The investigation may include interviews with all involved employees, including the alleged harasser, and any employees who are aware of facts or incidents alleged to have occurred. If AEDC concludes that harassment or

discrimination in violation of applicable law has taken place, it will take prompt and effective remedial action which may include some or all of the following steps:

- Restore any lost terms, conditions or benefits of employment to the complaining employee; and/or,
- Discipline the harasser which may take the form of written disciplinary warnings, transfer, demotion, suspension and/or termination.

If the harassment is from a customer or vendor, AEDC will take appropriate action. AEDC will report conclusions to the affected individuals.

The investigation will be objective and fair, and will take into consideration all information that supports the complaint, as well as all information that might suggest the complaint to be false or in bad faith. Reasonable efforts will be made to keep the complaint, the investigation and the results confidential, but the investigation itself will require limited disclosure of pertinent information to certain parties, including the alleged harasser.

A good faith complaint and/or participation in AEDC's investigation will not subject any employee to any adverse employment consequences or retaliation of any kind.

Any employee who commits unlawful discrimination or harassment in violation of applicable laws is subject to discipline, up to and including discharge.

5.j. Security

AEDC strives to provide a secure work environment inclusive of in-person, virtual and or teleworking settings for our employees, clients, and visitors. We ask that you immediately report any security concerns to your supervisor. Immediately report lost, stolen, missing, or compromised organization property to your supervisor and/or the COO. In the event of in-person meetings, employees are encouraged to be prudent about bringing personal items to work. AEDC is not responsible for losses resulting from theft of property while employees are away from their work area.

5.k. Weapon-Free Work Environment

To ensure the Corporation maintains a workplace safe and free of violence for all employees inclusive of in-person, virtual and or teleworking settings, the Corporation prohibits the possession or use of weapons on Corporation property. An exception to this exists under Texas law in that licensed gun owners under Texas Labor Code Section 52.061 are allowed to have such firearms and ammunition inside their own locked vehicles parked on AEDC property. Since AEDC is working remotely with the use of facilities owned by the City or other entities, employees seeking to carry a licensed weapons during work hours are asked to learn about the requirements of facilities before going into such places and respectfully honor the efforts of others to maintain safe environments.

5.l. Political Activity and Lobbying

As a quasi-governmental body, AEDC supports everyone's right and willingness to become involved in the civic and political process(es), as well as everyone's right and obligation to exercise

their First Amendment rights. As a nonprofit entity that receives local resources and may receive federal and state funding, AEDC has an obligation to ensure that all employees avoid any actual or perceived partisan or political activities.

Any endorsement and/or time spent volunteering, campaigning, at rallies, etc. that either attempt to influence legislation or support a particular candidate or political party, must be done on personal time. Employees should request the time off from their supervisor, and if participating in such activities, participation should only be a personal representation - clearly indicating that you are attending as a private citizen and not as a representative of AEDC.

Until it is fully established and/or directed differently by the Board of Directors, AEDC considers itself a “silent partner” on matters that align with the mission and objectives of the organization. Meaning the organization is non-partisan, it does not endorse or contribute to civic and/or political activity, and members of the organization actively work with whom is elected or seated for public service. There may be events that support causes that are acceptable because they do not endorse or oppose a particular candidate or piece of legislation. In the highly unusual event that AEDC leadership believes the organization needs to be on the front lines advocating for changes related to our mission, employees will be notified by a supervisor, the COO and/or the President and CEO. Employees that are uncomfortable with such activities are asked to connect with their supervisor and/or the COO to discuss in advance or immediately upon being contacted.

Nothing in this policy prohibits an employee from initiating or engaging in any lawful activity related to wages, hours or working conditions, nor does any policy in this Handbook prohibit employees or others from engaging in any other protected activities in accordance with the National Labor Relations Act.

5.m. Gifts Policy (External Contributions)

An employee or official of the Austin Economic Development Corporation may not accept or solicit any gift or favor that might reasonably tend to influence and/or create a conflict of interest for the employee or official in the discharge of official duties. Similarly, the employee or official may not accept or solicit any gift or favor that the employee or official should know has been offered with the intent to influence their work and/or official conduct. An employee and official of AEDC should not accept or solicit any gift or favor that the employee or official should know has been offered with the intent to reward conduct and the stewarding of any process, program and/or or resources of the organization.

Perishable gifts to an individual employee and/or employees of the organization may be accepted if the receipt of the gift follows the statements above and in line with the Ethics Policy (**Addendum** **_____**). Perishable gifts to one or more officials of the organization may be accepted if the receipt of the gift follows the statements above and in line with the Ethics Policy (**Addendum** **_____**) – it is expected the official or officials will provide or make these gifts available to one or more staff members. Employees may accept promotional items of negligible value or items that can be used to support typical job functions or the operations of the organization – including meals, which should ethically be kept at a minimum.

5.n. Gifts Policy (Internal Contributions)

AEDC Employees and officials are only able to gift to peers or downward, meaning employees may receive a gift from another employee at or above their class. All employees may contribute to gifts to an employee of any class as a group or the collective staff/organization. There is no requirement or retaliation for not contributing to individual, group or collective gifts for an employee.

6. Equipment and Communications

The policies and procedures in this section provide employees with an understanding of the appropriate use of office equipment and organizational records procedures. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your supervisor.

6.a. Office Equipment Policy

Employees may use all AEDC office equipment to complete their job responsibilities. Employees are expected to exercise good judgment and care when using office equipment. Additionally, employees are expected to return office equipment to the office within a pre-arranged period. Damage due to normal wear and tear of this equipment is covered in the AEDC insurance policies. However, if an employee damages or loses any equipment due to negligence, they may be expected to reimburse AEDC for the item or the cost of its repair. If the reimbursement does not occur within a reasonable period, AEDC is authorized to deduct the amount from the employee's paycheck.

6.b. Communication Infrastructure

AEDC's computer equipment and electronic communications systems (such as phones, e-mail, etc.) are the property of AEDC. Use of AEDC's computer equipment and/or electronic communications systems, regardless of the subject matter, should never be considered private or confidential. The computer equipment and electronic communications systems are dedicated to use for the organization's business purposes. Reasonable personal use is acceptable if such personal use does not interfere with AEDC business and does not violate any AEDC policy. However, personal use that could generate additional expense to the organization or consumes more than a small portion of an employee's time and effort is not appropriate.

AEDC reserves the right to intercept, record, monitor and/or review at any time communications made or retrieved by an individual while using any of AEDC's computer or electronic communication systems. AEDC also reserves the right to record and disclose all communications sent over its systems for any purpose. Please note that password protection provided by AEDC does not insulate communications and/or information from AEDC review or disclosure. Your use of any of AEDC's computer equipment and/or electronic communications systems constitutes your consent to AEDC's monitoring of your communications and usage of the computer systems.

Appropriate action will be taken for usage of any of the computer and/or electronic communications systems in any manner inconsistent with this policy and may subject any employee to disciplinary action up to and including termination from employment. Viruses can cause substantial damage to computer systems. As such, no unauthorized software is permitted on AEDC systems; prior permission must be obtained from the COO or the COO's designee. Files obtained from outside the organization including disks brought from home; files downloaded from the Internet, newsgroups, bulletin boards, or other online services; files attached to e-mail;

and files provided by customers or vendors may contain dangerous computer viruses that may damage the company's computer network. Each user is responsible for taking reasonable precautions to ensure they do not introduce viruses into AEDC's network. Users should understand that their home computers and laptops may contain viruses. If you suspect that a virus has been introduced into AEDC's network, notify your supervisor and/or the COO immediately.

6.c. Organizational Marketing, Promotion and Branding

All AEDC logos, presentations, website, social media or any channel for providing content on behalf of the organization are the sole property of AEDC and any such items require review and approval of use for consistent, appropriate and legal purposes. It is a violation of policy to employ the name Austin Economic Development Corporation and AEDC or any graphic identification symbols in digital or printed material intended to endorse or promote individual enterprises or to otherwise enhance private gain without the prior written consent of the CEO.

6.d. External Communications and Media Requests

Leadership of AEDC strives to keep an open, authentic, and casual demeanor for communication with external partners, clients, and the public. Leadership also values the importance of sophistication in the professionalism portrayed on behalf of the organization and those it serves. When sending individualized messages or distributing messages to a larger audience, employees are asked to do so in a professional and courteous manner. Please consider the tone of the organization, the policies under which employees are to abide and the possibility of any items being reviewed publicly through open records. Employees are asked to be responsive in a timely and authentic manner, promoting the highest level of customer service.

All requests to present or speak publicly and requests from the media, including those more casual and conversational channels via social media, are required to be reviewed by the supervisor and/or the COO or the employee(s) designated by the COO. Use of personal social media and digital conversations is not restricted or regularly monitored by the organization, but staff are asked to be conscious of the organization when participating in such forums and to include the appropriate disclaimer or distinction for one's personal views, statements and/or endorsements, etc. not being that of the organization. Should the employee's personal or professional use of any such channels or outlets violate organizational policies or result in significant disruption to the organization, disciplinary action including penalty and/or termination may be exercised.

6.e. Code of Conduct

The leadership of AEDC seeks to build a creditable and accountable reputation to support the vision and mission of the organization and community for many years to come. All employees will adhere to the Code of **Conduct Policy** of AEDC and conduct themselves with professionally with added measures of honesty, integrity, and authenticity. AEDC team members are expected to be timely and courteous or respectful of others' time. While the nature of the Corporation's work will inevitably bring employees into some challenging situations with other institutions, public services, partners, or others in the community, they should maintain a positive attitude towards each, as well as the Austin Economic Development Corporation, its officials, employees, contracted support, and clients. Employees are asked to contribute to the goodwill of the

organization by treating all internal and external contacts courteously, giving them due respect, recognition and making them feel valued.

7. Business and Travel Expenses

It is the policy of AEDC to pay for the reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in connection with approved business operations and approved travel on behalf of the organization. To the best of their ability, employees will abide by state travel guidelines strongly encourages use of travel discounts when making travel arrangements. Travelers should incur the lowest reasonable travel expenses and exercise care to avoid impropriety or the appearance of impropriety. If a circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in this travel policy, then the most conservative course of action should be taken.

7.a. Authorization and Responsibility

Travel and related expenses must be for a genuine, sincere, and substantial business purpose that delivers value to the organization and community in which the organization serves. Staff travel must be authorized in advance. The purpose or scope of the travel should align with the employees Professional Development Plan. Staff seeking to travel shall submit a **Travel Authorization Form** to their supervisor for initiation of the approval process. No arrangement should be established, or expenses incurred before final and complete approval. Employees are responsible for any travel related expenses incurred before approval, if not approved, and/or those that are outside of the scope of travel or policy.

7.b. Personal Funds

Employees should review reimbursement and advance guidelines before spending personal funds for business travel to determine if such expenses are reimbursable. AEDC reserves the right to deny reimbursement of travel-expenses for failure to comply with policies and procedures. Travelers who use personal funds to facilitate travel arrangements will not be reimbursed until after the trip occurs and proper documentation is submitted.

7.c. Exceptions

Occasionally it may be necessary for travelers to request exceptions to this travel policy. Requests for exceptions to the policy must be made in writing and approved by the President and CEO. Exceptions related to the President and CEO's expenses must be submitted to the Treasurer of the Board for approval. In most instances, the expected turnaround time for review and approval is ten (10) business days. Additionally, should there be any special needs while the employee is on the approved travel, the employee must immediately contact the supervisor with any exceptional requests. Exceptions for additional or unforeseen expenses could be reimbursed if the special circumstances are demonstrated to not be caused by the employee, superfluous and/or in violation of the organization's frugal nature.

7.d. Travel Expenses and Procedures

AEDC is a quasi-governmental, non-profit organization that partners with a majority public entities and institutions to support the delivery of certain community goals and values. Employees are strongly encouraged to demonstrate best efforts to support frugal travel practices. The travel policies and procedures defined herein are intended to safeguard the employee and organization so that AEDC may continue to encourage equitable and professionally beneficial travel opportunities. Should there come a concern or matter before, during or after the approved travel,

the employee is required to act in the highest regard of the intent for travel, public funding, and reputation of the organization. Approval of employee travel is a privilege and not a requirement.

7.d.1. General Reimbursement Information

All reimbursements require receipt and/or proof of payment. Claims for reimbursement of expenses should be included in a regular expense report that is approved by the employee's supervisor. **Expense reports** should not be submitted for approval until the report of expenses exceeds \$50.

7.d.2. Travel Purchase(s) and Reimbursement(s)

Requests for reimbursements of travel-related expenses are submitted through an expense report. The report may contain other expenses outside of the approved travel but all must be approved by the employee's supervisor and the report must be signed by the COO or President and CEO. The COO or President and CEO may withhold reimbursement if there is reason to believe that the expenditures are inappropriate or extravagant. The form must be accompanied by supporting documentation. All in-state travel reimbursements must be submitted within seventy-two (72) hours of return. All out-of-state travel reimbursements must be submitted within one (1) week of return. All reimbursements from international travel must be submitted within twenty-five (25) business days from the return of approved travel. Reimbursements of travel expenses is based on documentation of reasonable and actual expenses supported by the original, itemized receipts where required. Reimbursement is allowed only when reimbursement has not been, and will not be, received from other sources. Normal travel reimbursements that may be paid by AEDC are listed below:

7.d.2.a. Airfare

An original itemized airline receipt, an e-ticket receipt/statement or an internet receipt/statement is required. The receipt must show the method of payment and indicate that payment was made. Travelers are expected to obtain the lowest available airfare that reasonably meets business travel needs. Travelers are encouraged to book flights at least 30 days in advance to avoid premium pricing. Coach class or economy tickets must be purchased for domestic or international flights. First-class tickets are not authorized for travel on the organization's behalf. Should the employee elect to upgrade to Business or First-class, they are to do so with personal funds and must show the cost of a Coach class or economy ticket for the same flight to be reimbursed the amount offered by the organization. Employees are welcomed to extend their time traveling so that they may incorporate vacation leave but to be properly reimbursed for the airfare, the employee is required to provide documentation of flights into or out of the approved destination on the day they would arrive or depart from the approved destination for work purposes.

For approved domestic travel, AEDC will reimburse the employee for the cost of one checked bag. For approved international travel, AEDC will reimburse the employee for the cost of two checked bags. Costs incurred for additional bags and/or excessive weight of luggage may be considered for reimbursement for

special circumstances, must be submitted with a receipt and must be approved by the COO or President and CEO. Costs for traveling with materials needed to support the scope or purpose of work at the destination should be evaluated in advance and the options should be weighed for the most cost-effective option to transport materials. The organization will cover the cost(s) or reimburse the employee for the cost(s) of getting necessary materials to and from the work location(s). Employees are expected to practice best efforts to maintain the spirit of all policies and procedures when transporting necessary work-related materials and equipment.

7.d.2.b. Personal Automobile Use for Domestic Travel

In all cases where an employee is driving a personal vehicle for work related use and expenses, the vehicle and driver must be properly insured and compliant or in good standing with State requirements and certifications for operating the specified automobile. Further, for any personal automobile transportation to be claimed by the organization, the employee must be in the proper physical and mental state to operate the automobile in a manner that is compliant with State rules and regulations governing such privileges. AEDC is not responsible for any action or consequences for the employee traveling outside of the stated conditions.

Employees will be reimbursed at the Federal mileage reimbursement rate for official business mileage accumulated in a privately owned vehicle that is beyond the normal round-trip mileage incurred from the employee's home to the permanently assigned office or workstation and back home again. Since all employees are currently working remotely from their home, they may be reimbursed for mileage directly connected with the business need/trip (i.e., mileage from the home or temporary office site to a field site and back to the home or temporary office site). Actual mileage must be reported and per/trip mileage over 60 miles must be approved by the supervisor. Mileage incurred for personal needs will not be reimbursed. Suspicious and/or excessive claims for mileage incurred may not be reimbursed following investigation and may result in disciplinary action, including penalty and/or termination.

In the even an employee is traveling a longer distance for approved work-related expense and elects to drive a personal vehicle rather than fly, they must provide a comparison between the cost to drive and the cost to fly. For this comparison, the employee will determine the cost of mileage to and from the destination versus the cost of round-trip airfare. AEDC will reimburse the lesser of the cost to drive and the cost to fly.

7.d.2.c. Rental Automobile for Domestic Travel

Reimbursement for a commercial rental vehicle as a primary mode of transportation is authorized only if the rented vehicle is more economical than any other type of public transportation, if the needs for the use of the vehicle is not personally available or available through the organization, or if the

destination is not otherwise accessible. Vehicle rental at a destination city is reimbursable. Original receipts are required. AEDC authorizes reimbursement for the most economic vehicle available. Travelers are asked to make the best efforts to fill gas tank before returning the vehicle to the rental agency to avoid service fees and more expensive fuel rates.

In cases where an employee is driving a rental vehicle for work related use and expenses, the vehicle and driver must be properly insured and compliant or in good standing with State requirements and certifications for operating the specified automobile. The employee traveling in the rental vehicle is encouraged to be strongly aware of the need to return the vehicle in the condition it is received. Further, for any rental automobile transportation to be claimed by the organization, the employee must be in the proper physical and mental state to operate the automobile in a manner that is compliant with State rules and regulations governing such privileges. AEDC is not responsible for any action or consequences for the employee traveling outside of the stated conditions. The organization will not be responsible for any costs incurred for any damage(s) that the employee cannot reasonably demonstrated cause or fault that is not of their own.

7.d.2.d. Conference and/or Class Registration Fees

AEDC will reimburse pre-approved conference and/or class registration fees, including business-related banquets or meals that are part of the conference and/or class registration. Original receipts to support the payment are required. If the conference does not provide a receipt, then a cancelled check, credit card slip/statement or documentation that the amount was paid is required for reimbursement. A prorated amount for the meals provided must be deducted from the travelers per diem (see [Section ____](#)). Entertainment activities will not be reimbursed but books, manuals, or items needed for classwork may be reimbursed with receipts. Registration and/or class fees paid directly by an individual will not be reimbursed until the conference is complete.

7.d.2.e. Lodging

The cost of overnight lodging (room rate and tax only) will be reimbursed to the traveler if the authorized travel is 45 miles or more from the traveler's home or primary or temporary worksite. AEDC will reimburse lodging expenses at reasonable, single occupancy or standard business room rates. The lodging establishment selected should be that of the conference, convention, and/or class or the establishment that is selected and utilized by a majority of fellow travelers in which the employee is approved join. Any exceptions for the selection of a different lodging establishment that is within proximity and meets the expectations of the AEDC travel policy may be requested by the employee through the Exception procedure (see [Section ____](#)), before or during approved travel. The employee should request forms for Sales and Use Tax Exemption from the establishment and be prepared to present a copy of the AEDC Sales and Use Tax Exemption Certificate upon arrival.

7.d.2.f. Per Diem Meals

Per diem allowances are paid for approved in-state overnight travel that is 45 miles or more from the traveler's home or primary or temporary worksite. Per diem allowances are applicable for all approved out-of-state travel. AEDC per diem rates are based on the US General Services Administration Guidelines, which vary by city location. In addition to meals, these rates include incidental expenses such as fees and service tips (e.g., housekeeping or porter tips). Incidental expenses, unless specifically cited in this policy, will not be reimbursed. Per diem allowances are based on departure and return times over the entire 24-hour day and are prorated accordingly. If a free meal is served or included in a conference registration and/or class fee, built into the standard, single hotel room rate or replaced by a legitimate business meal, the per diem allowance for that meal may not be claimed. Receipts are not required for per diem allowances. Per diem allowances can be paid before or after the trip is completed at the discretion of the COO or President and CEO.

7.d.2.f. Business Meals

Travelers may be reimbursed for business meals if there is a genuine and substantial business purpose, and the participants are actively engaged in AEDC business during the meal or immediately before or after. Original itemized receipts are required, and the employee must be able to demonstrate approval from the supervisor, COO, or President and CEO for the request(s) before purchase any unplanned or unforeseen business meals.

7.d.2.g. Business Expenses

Business expenses, including faxes, photocopies, Internet charges, data ports and business telephone calls incurred while on travel status, can be reimbursed. Original itemized receipts are required. In the event of international travel, employees should research and request approval from the employees' service provider for packages that will support wireless telecommunication and data services for the most favorable rate to the individual and organization. Employees are encouraged to maintain economical practices that are within the spirit of the travel policy and procedures, utilizing low to no cost services when and where available.

7.d.2.h. Parking

Original receipts are required for reimbursement of parking fees. The lodging bill can be used as a receipt when charges are included as part of the overnight stay. Employees are also able to show credit/debit statements for payment of approved parking expenses. Employees are encouraged to maintain economical practices that are within the spirit of the travel policy and procedures, utilizing low to no cost parking or parking services, transportation and or services when and where available.

7.d.2.i. Tolls

AEDC will reimburse the cost(s) associated with a demonstrable and necessary toll. All employees are encouraged to practice best efforts for determining appropriate requests for expensing toll fees or charges, as those expenses deemed to be incurred for the convenience of the employee will not be reimbursed. Original receipts are required for reimbursement of toll fees, but employees are also able to show credit/debit statements or other methods for payment of toll expenses associated with approved travel.

7.d.2.j. Miscellaneous Transportation

Original receipts are required for reimbursement of costs for each occurrence of taxi, bus, subway, metro, ferry, and other appropriate modes of transportation. Employees are encouraged to maintain economical practices that are within the spirit of the travel policy and procedures, utilizing low to no cost transportation services when and where available.

In all cases where the employee is on approved travel or similar work associated activities, functions, and/or events and the employee does not believe they are of proper physical and/or mental state to operate an automobile in a manner that is compliant with State rules and regulations governing such privileges to arrive safely at their lodging or home, they are eligible to be reimbursed for miscellaneous transportation costs to take them to the destination. In all situations, AEDC is not responsible for any action or consequences for the employee while traveling in the stated condition(s). The organization will not be responsible for any cost(s) incurred for any damage(s) that the employee cannot reasonably demonstrated cause or fault that is not of their own. Further, the employee can expect to have a discussion with their supervisor upon receipt of the expense report for signature, but the employee can also expect to not be penalized or face any retaliation for reasonable need of this sort.

7.d.2.k. Childcare, Babysitting, Elderly-sitting, or Pet-sitting/Kennel charges

To make all work approved travel an equitable opportunity for AEDC employees, the organization will reimburse up to \$35 per day per child or elderly person of immediate relation within the employees' household or \$35 per day for pets within the employees' household, if the employee does not have other members in their household or next-of-kin able to provide such care during work approved travel. In all cases, receipts or other appropriate and agreed-upon documentation to support reimbursement of the approved expense should be included with the expense report. Employees are asked to use their best judgement and professional discernment in these matters and always prioritize goodwill for the organization and the community in which it serves.

7.d.2.l. Destination Specific Needs for Approved International Travel

To the best of the organization's ability and with reason, AEDC will reimburse employees for destination specific needs or extraordinary necessities to support approved travel on behalf of the organization. Items for consideration include destination specific materials for operations, fees for expediting passport or

passport renewal, vaccinations, and visas when required as a specific and necessary condition of the travel assignment. Needs and costs should be discussed with the supervisor when seeking approval. Any special needs during travel should follow the Exceptions (Section ____) process for approval and reimbursement. Costs for these specific and approved needs should be paid by the organization in advance of travel. In all cases, receipts or other appropriate and agreed-upon documentation to support reimbursement of the approved expense should be included with the expense report.

7.d.2.m. Travel Related Benefits

Employees can accrue and utilize benefits from programs in which they are personally enrolled but, unless the organization is financially benefitting from the use of an employee's benefits, preference for the selection of certain establishments or services will not be given to those that provide such benefits to the employee. Employees are asked to use their best judgement and professional discernment in these matters and always prioritize goodwill for the organization and the community in which it serves.

7.d.2.n. Non-reimbursable Travel Expenses

The following items that may be associated with business travel will not be reimbursed by AEDC:

- Airline club memberships.
- Airline upgrades.
- Business class for domestic flights or first class for all flights.
- Commuting between home and the primary work location.
- Costs incurred by traveler's failure to cancel travel or hotel reservations.
- Evening or formal wear expenses.
- Haircuts and personal grooming.
- Laundry and dry cleaning.
- Reasonable personal items commonly used for travel.
- Personal entertainment expenses, including in-flight movies, headsets, health club facilities, hotel pay-per-view movies, in-theater movies, social activities, and related incidental costs.
- Travel accident insurance premiums or purchase of additional travel insurance.
- Other expenses not directly related to the business travel.

7.d.2.o. Travel for Non-Employees

Additional costs for travel, lodging, meal or other travel expenses for spouses or other family members will not be reimbursed unless the individual has a genuine company purpose for engaging in the travel or attending the event. Such travel is generally limited to senior management and should occur infrequently. Approval from the President and CEO is required. Approval for the President and CEO to be

reimbursed for non-employee travel must be provided by the Treasurer of the Board.

7.d.3. Travel Advance and Reimbursement(s)

Travel advances are generally available to assist in defraying out of pocket cash while traveling for an extended period of time. Travel advances are issued primarily for daily and per diem expenses. Prepaid items such as transportation (airfare/lodging) and conference registration are recommended to be processed directly through AEDC or reported using a travel expense report in a timely manner that approved expenses can be reimbursed prior to approved travel.

Approved travel advances must be submitted at least two weeks prior to the scheduled departure date. If an advance is requested less than two weeks prior to travel, the advance may not be processed in time for the trip. Request for any additional payment, advance or reimbursement will not be processed for any traveler with an outstanding advance that is more than two weeks beyond the established trip return date.

All terms for items associated with travel reimbursement outlined in Section 7.d.2 will be held consistent and applicable to items reported in a travel advance. No other items or expenses associated with travel will be considered or compensated, pre or post travel, unless a request for an exception is approved by the President and CEO.

Failure to account for a cash advance after 30 days will result in reporting the advance to the IRS on the traveler's W-2 and withholding taxes on the advance amount from the traveler's paycheck. Per IRS regulation, once an unsettled cash advance has been added to a W-2 it cannot be reversed – even if settled.

8. Performance Management

The leadership of AEDC believes that the organizations strongest asset and resource for catalyzing efforts in support of its mission is derived from the people it employs. With that in mind, performance management is envisioned as a multi-faceted communications tool and procedural resource for mutually beneficial experiences between the organization and the talented individuals working directly within. The policies and procedures in this section of the handbook are intended to provide employees with an understanding of the organization's performance management process and expectations, the resources, and tools to support fair management and disciplinary and/or grievance procedures.

8.a. Performance Management Process

AEDC's mission, the institutions it represents, and the communities the organization seeks to reflect and serve all require and deserve the highest level of authenticity and professionalism that can be supported. All employees should expect periodic performance reviews that go above and beyond the typical supervisor-employee review process. Performance reviews are designed for supervisors and employees to discuss the employee's goals and job expectations, current job performance, encourage and recognize skills and achievements, and discuss approaches for meeting work-related and development-related goals. AEDC's performance reviews will also seek the feedback of executives, peers and subordinates, possibly some key external stakeholders or professional connections, to provide each employee and manager a more complete 360 evaluation. Together, employees and supervisors will set specific goals with equally as specific

tasks and means for achieving the goals that contribute to the efforts of the organization. There will also be discussion of ways in which the employee can learn new skills or strengthen existing skills.

The annual performance review is intended to supplement – but not replace -- regular one-on-one meetings and dialogue between employees and their supervisors for purposes of feedback, recognition, goal setting and career development. A mid-year performance review is designed for the employee and supervisor to intentionally connect on the stated objectives to review the actual outcomes contributed by the employee midway through the period so to keep all parties apprised of priorities and any possible resources required for successful performance. Employees will be responsible for drafting the annual AEDC Performance Review as a self-evaluation annually. Supervisors will be responsible for reviewing and completing the same form before meeting with the employee for a final discussion and execution of the form before the start of the evaluation period. Employees will be responsible for updating the executed form to provide to supervisors in advance of mid-year and annual performance review meetings, so the supervisor has the employee's specific data and perspectives to consider. The Supervisor is then responsible for scheduling the mid-year and annual performance review meeting (at a minimum) to review outcomes, findings, and ratings. During these discussions, supervisors and employees will identify strengths and determine areas for growth. Once agreed upon the supervisor and employee will sign the review document and submit it for personnel file storage.

The Austin Economic Development Corporation encourages fair, efficient, and equitable solutions for problems arising out of the employment relationship. Individuals experiencing problems should attempt to resolve them informally before exercising the grievance process. Employees are encouraged to discuss the concerns directly with the individual with whom the problem exists.

8.b. Professional Development Plan

AEDC encourages its employees to seek professional development opportunities. The Professional Development Plan will provide the employee's long-term vision for the progression of their career with specific, aligning short-term actions that are supported by the supervisor. These approved short-term actions will be collected to anticipate costs for equitably supporting all employee's professional development needs and inform the budget of the next Fiscal Year. AEDC has a modest budget available for equitably covering any associated costs; therefore, paid professional development opportunities are a privilege and not a requirement, based on merit and other factors determined by the COO and President and CEO.

Employees should research study and work programs, professional certifications, or other formal and informal means of professional development. Each should feel comfortable seeking grants or exploring financial support the organization could leverage, as well as guidance or mentorship from within or outside of the organization to support their creation and recalibration of the individual Performance Development Plan. The Plan will be included on each AEDC Performance Review but, the employee should recognize there may not be resources to support any short-term elements changed during the mid-year review. Any professional development or learning opportunities directly tied to an employee's job function may be considered regular work time and does not require that employees use personal vacation time for this learning opportunity. Any professional development or learning opportunity not directly tied to an employee's job

function but found within the Professional Development Plan may be attended but may require employees to use personal resources and vacation time to attend.

8.c. Disciplinary Procedure

Corrective / disciplinary action may be taken against an employee in response to a rule infraction or other violation of AEDC policies. Corrective action will continue until the violation or infraction is corrected or the employee is terminated.

Corrective action usually begins with a verbal warning, followed by a written warning that is placed in the employee's personnel folder. If more serious corrective action is warranted or required in the AEDC's sole discretion, the employee may be put on probation, suspended, or have his or her employment immediately terminated. Progressive disciplinary actions are not mandatory. Depending upon the severity or circumstances of any violation of company policies or rules, AEDC has the right and discretion to impose any disciplinary sanction, including termination, regardless of whether there have been any prior warnings or notices.

Anything in this Employee Handbook to the contrary notwithstanding, AEDC may take any and all disciplinary actions against employees, including termination, for disciplinary problems, performance problems, misconduct, rule infractions, and/or violations of AEDC policy which it considers to be serious. Examples of such serious violations subject to immediate termination include, but are not limited to: insubordinate behavior, theft, destruction of Company property, breach of customer or client confidentiality, untruthfulness, workplace bullying, discrimination, retaliation, harassment, violence, or threats of violence.

8.d. Grievance Policy

All employees are covered by this policy, including those who are within their introductory period, and those with temporary assignments. This policy covers complaints concerning wages, hours of work, working conditions, performance evaluations, merit raises, job assignments, reprimands, results from the Disciplinary Procedure (excluding termination) or the interpretation or application of a rule, regulation, or policy.

8.d.1. Retaliation and Confidentiality

No employee will be penalized or disciplined for filing a grievance or for aiding another employee in the presentation of a grievance. Persons filing grievances with reckless disregard for the truth or in willful ignorance of the facts are excluded from protection and may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

8.d.2. Informal Resolution

As outlined in the Disciplinary Procedure (Section ____), AEDC encourages direct communication between supervisors and employees to resolve workplace concerns promptly. Supervisors are required to document and create a record of any such concern, no matter how informal the concern may be considered or how informally a resolution is reached. The employee is also asked to document and make record of the interaction with their supervisor for any future need. If an employee has been unsuccessful in informally resolving concerns directly with his/her supervisor or manager, the employee may proceed to the Grievance Procedure.

8.d.3. Grievance Procedure

To initiate a formal grievance, the employee shall present the grievance in writing to his or her supervisor within seven calendar days from the date of the action that is the subject of the grievance. The employee's statement of complaint must include the employee's recommendation(s) for resolution of the grievance. Relevant documents or any other information pertinent to the matter should also be provided. Once the grievance has been committed to writing, it cannot be changed. If an employee's immediate supervisor is the subject of the grievance, the employee may file the grievance in writing with the COO or, in the case of a grievance with the COO then file with the President and CEO. In the case of a grievance with the President and CEO the employee must file the grievance with the COO, who is required to immediately file with the Board Chair. Supervisors, the COO, the President and CEO, and/or the Board Chair must respond to the employee in writing within seven calendar days of receipt of the grievance.

8.d.4. Review of Grievance

If the grievance is not satisfactorily resolved by the COO or if the employee does not receive a response in accordance with the timelines outlined in this policy, the employee may submit a written response stating why the decision is unacceptable to the following persons in the order listed:

1. Supervisor;
2. COO;
3. President and CEO;
4. Chair of the Board or designee.

The employee's grievance to the next level must be filed with the appropriate next higher level of management within seven calendar days of 1) receipt by the employee of the response or 2) the deadline for response if no response was received. The employee's grievance to the next level must be in writing and describe clearly why the decision is unacceptable to the employee. The employee's grievance must be responded to within seven calendar days. Failure to respond to the employee within the time limit allows the grievant to automatically submit the grievance to the next higher appeal level. The decision of the Chair of the Board or designee is final.

8.d.5. Termination During Grievance

Upon termination of employment from the organization, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, dispute resolution and grievance processes end.

8.d.6. Records from Disciplinary Action and Grievance

All required records and notes including the forms or materials stated above, written grievance, and any or all decisions, responses, and reactions regarding the disciplinary and/or grievance shall be collected and remain part of the employee personnel record.

9. Leaving Austin Economic Development Corporation

AEDC is committed to the philosophy that employment relationships are both personal and voluntary. The organization aspires for mutually beneficial working relationships with each employee and recognizes that changing circumstances make it impossible to guarantee employment. All employment with AEDC is "at-will" employment. At-will employment allows for either the employee or employer to terminate the

employment relationship at any time, and without reason or notice. Your employment with AEDC has no specified duration, and either you or the organization may end the employment relationship whenever either believes it is best to do so, without consideration of cause or notice. The policies and procedures outlined in this section of the handbook provide employees with an understanding of the manner in which the organization handles situations involving separation of employment.

9.a. Voluntary Termination of Employment

If you decide to resign from your job at AEDC, it is requested that you provide a minimum two (2) weeks' notice. Please submit a professional Letter of Resignation to your supervisor with a copy to the COO and President and CEO. Before leaving on your last day of work, you must return all organization property, including keys, credit cards, computer equipment, and all documents issued to you or created by you during your employment. A final expense report and timesheet should be provided to your supervisor before leaving on your final day. A mutually agreeable time for an exit interview will be scheduled at the discretion of the COO and/or the President and CEO. You are considered to have resigned if you do not return from a leave of absence or have an unexcused or unreported absence of two (2) consecutive business days.

9.b. Involuntary Termination of Employment

AEDC reserves the right to terminate any employee at any time, with or without cause or notice. Generally, when an employee is believed to have a job performance problem or is engaging in behavior that is unacceptable or counterproductive, the employee will be given an opportunity to improve his or her behavior to an acceptable level by means of a disciplinary action process. However, AEDC reserves the right to skip any and all steps in its disciplinary action process and terminate an employee without notice or cause. All involuntary terminations require prior review and approval by the President and CEO. In the event of involuntary termination, the COO will contact the former employee within 48 hours to collect information needed to support any required final procedures. If the Chief Operations Officer can document three attempts to contact former employee unsuccessfully, the Chief Operations Officer may proceed with close-out processes provided the supervisors estimations and assumptions. The Austin Economic Development Corporation is not responsible for any claims from the former employee following the best effort (defined above) in the 48-hour period. Former employees with questions or needs may submit their requests, questions or needs to the COO via email.

9.c. Job Elimination and Layoffs

Given the realities of the nonprofit sector, cutbacks or job reductions may be necessary due to changes in programs, funding, or forces beyond our control. AEDC will strive to minimize the negative impact on current employees if a reduction in the workforce becomes necessary. Laid-off employees currently enrolled in AEDC's insurance plan will be offered the opportunity to continue the coverage according to insurance providers and State Continuation rules and regulations.

9.d. Exit Interviews

The COO and/or the President and CEO often meets with all exiting employees on or before their last day of work. This exit interview is meant to provide employees with the

opportunity to reflect on their experience at AEDC and to offer comments, advice, or suggestions pertaining to the organization's work policies, practices, and improvements. The meeting will be requested at the discretion of either or all parties, and no party is required to participate.

10. Records Management

The policies and procedures outlined in this section of the handbook provide employees with an understanding of how AEDC retains and destroys records. AEDC records shall not be destroyed or otherwise disposed of by any officer, director, or employee on their own initiative. The COO will approve Records Retention Authorization and all employees are required to comply with the policy, procedures and practices contained within.

10.a. Current Records

Each employee is responsible for their individual programmatic records. This includes program reports, volunteer records, historical records of program activity, etc.

10.b. Inactive Record Storage

All inactive records of value will be stored digitally or in AEDC shared file cabinets (on or off-site), unless otherwise authorized by the Chief Operations Officer. Records of value include fiscal, legal, and historical documents. Program records over two years old depending on program needs are considered inactive. Inactive program records should be stored electronically and/or in the office space or the appointed off-site space allocated.

10.c. Access to Stored Records

Persons inside or outside AEDC shall have access to information in employees' personnel records in conformance with statutes and AEDC policies on records. The COO shall establish procedures for the release of information. Information which is public information, and which should be released upon request includes name, date of hire, current position title, current salary, organizational unit assignment, date of separation, office address and office telephone number, current job description, full-time or part-time, and appointment type. Unless release is legally required, information, which AEDC has determined to be an invasion of personal privacy, shall not be released to the public. Such information includes but is not limited to the individual's home telephone number and home address; spouse's or other relatives' names; birth date; social security number; citizenship; income tax withholdings; health care records; and information relating to evaluation of performance. AEDC will take the appropriate steps to secure personal information and communicate requests for such inquiries.

10.d. Disposal of Records

Records stored will not be transferred or destroyed without prior written notice to the staff of the program and/or department of origin. Written notice consists of an approved Certificate of Records Disposition. All AEDC records of a confidential or sensitive nature, which have been approved for disposal, may be disposed of by any method making record reconstruction impossible. Determination of what constitutes confidential or sensitive records is the responsibility of the COO in coordination with the staff of such programs and/or departments of origin. Health, payroll, and personnel files are the more obvious confidential records. Records that

are not of a confidential or sensitive nature may be disposed of by regularly established practices for handling wastepaper.

10.e. Record Retention

All AEDC records designated as vital or essential to the operation of the organization, and which if destroyed would seriously impair or disrupt normal AEDC affairs, or which by their loss might place the organization in a state of legal or fiscal jeopardy, are to be secured by the COO.

10.f. Responsibility

The COO, in coordination with the CEO, designates vital records and has the primary responsibility to keep these records secure.

10.g. Designated Records

The following is a list of records that must be secured:

- Documents of Governance
- Accounting records
- Land deed files and easements
- Medical and dental patient files
- Personnel records
- Terminated personnel files
- AEDC leases and contracts
- Grant agreements, final grant reports, and related fiscal compliance and reimbursement data
- Donor files
- Official Copy of Vital Records

10.h. Confidential Records

AEDC receives and holds confidential information of various sorts, some of which it is precluded from divulging by law except in limited circumstances, such as medical records, and some of which it does not divulge as a matter of policy, such as: personnel information, purchasing records prior to the opening of bids or prior to the award of contracts resulting from Requests for Proposals, proprietary information, or information AEDC has contractually agreed not to disclose.