

CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Employee Handbook



Department of Human Resources

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INTRODUCTION

This employee handbook is a summary of policies, procedures and practices related to human resource management at the Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD).

The Executive Director is accountable for leading an effective staff team and is thereby accountable for the development and implementation of the policies outlined in this manual. Managers are responsible for human resource management within their own staff teams and should reference this manual to ensure organizational consistency in the application of these practices.

The Executive Director is responsible for the maintaining the procedures and systems which support human resource management for the organization and is available to answer any questions or provide clarification on any content of this manual.

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

CESD wishes to maintain a work environment that fosters personal and professional growth for all employees. Maintaining such an environment is the responsibility of every staff person. Because of their role, managers and supervisors have the additional responsibility to lead in a manner which fosters an environment of respect for each person.

It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Foster cooperation and communication among each other
- Treat each other in a fair manner, with dignity and respect
- Promote harmony and teamwork in all relationships
- Strive for mutual understanding of standards for performance expectations, and communicate routinely to reinforce that understanding
- Encourage and consider opinions of other employees or members, and invite their participation in decisions that affect their work and their careers
- Encourage growth and development of employees by helping them achieve their personal goals at CESD and beyond
- Seek to avoid workplace conflict, and if it occurs, respond fairly and quickly to provide the means to resolve it
- Administer all policies equitably and fairly, recognizing that jobs are different but each is important; that individual performance should be recognized and measured against predetermined standards; and that each employee has the right to fair treatment
- Recognize that employees in their personal lives may experience crisis and show compassion and understanding

WHO WE ARE

The Center for Economic and Social Development (CESD) has been set up to promote research and analysis into domestic economic and social issues for the purpose to positively influence the public policy decision-making processes. The Center is a leading Azerbaijani think tank specialized in economic and social policy issues working with and establishing bridge between the government and the various representatives of civil society. At the same time, the Center positions itself in the center of the civil society having tight relationships with media, 24 communities spread around Azerbaijan, NGOs providing services at the grass-root level, international think-tanks, financial institutions and donors, and virtually all the other think tanks functioning in Azerbaijan.

Mission

The Center aims to: □(i) organise and promote theoretical and practical research in problems concerning economic and social development □(ii) provide policy advice to the Government of Azerbaijan □(iii) contribute to national capacity-building and raise public awareness of socio-economic issues □(iv) foster co-operation between the public, private, NGO sector, and educational institutions in addressing and resolving economic problems □(v) assist sustainable development, gender development, reducing poverty, achieving Millennium Development Goals and economic and social reforms.

Scope

Priority research areas include: □

- Macroeconomic Policy □
- Gender Development □
- Competitiveness of Azerbaijan Economy and Economic Growth □
- Social Sphere □
- Public Sector Reform □
- Financial System, Taxation and Fiscal Policy □
- Energy, Telecommunications, Transport □
- EU Accession, Regional Cooperation, and Foreign Economic Relations.

EMPLOYMENT AT CESD

Employment Equity

CESD is an equal opportunity employer and employs personnel without regard to race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, language, citizenship, creed, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, marital status, physical and/or mental handicap or financial ability. While remaining alert and sensitive to the issue of fair and equitable treatment for all, CESD has a special concern with the participation and advancement of members of four designated groups that have traditionally been disadvantaged in employment: women, visible minorities, aboriginal peoples and persons with disabilities.

Recruitment and Selection

All employment opportunities at CESD are posted for a minimum 10 working day period. They are posted on CESD's website and on the websites of affiliated

organizations. Occasionally, they are posted on employment websites or with an employment agency. Applications are encouraged from current employees but will be screened in the same manner as applications received from outside applicants.

Applicants are invited to submit their application, along with a current résumé, demonstrating that they meet the minimum criteria for the position being sought. At the closing date, all applications are screened, and candidates selected for interview are contacted. If the interview is positive, references will be contacted. Depending on the feedback provided, a position may be offered to the applicant.

Nepotism

No candidate shall be hired for a position where they may report to, or supervise a member of their immediate family. Immediate family is defined as: parent(s), step parent(s), foster parent(s), sibling(s), grandparent(s), spouse {including common law a/o same sex partner}, step child(ren) or ward of the staff member, father-in-law or mother-in-law (including parent of same sex partner). Personal relationships with other employees or members of CESD’s Board of Directors or Committees of CESD should be disclosed prior to accepting any offer from the employer. Failure to disclose this information would be considered contradictory to the Code of Ethics policy.

Orientation

All new employees to CESD shall receive an orientation session which will encompass an overview of general policies, procedures and operations. This will also provide employees, new to either a position or CESD, an opportunity to learn the performance expectations management has with regard to the position in question. They will be given a copy of this Employee Handbook and will be expected to learn its contents. They will also make aware of policies such as, Code of Ethics, and asked to sign off on their adherence to same.

Employee Classifications

Each position at CESD shall be classified as either Administrative or Management in nature, as determined by the Executive Director. This decision will be based on the duties assigned and qualifications required for each position.

Employee Duties

Attached to an Offer of Employment, is a description of the job and the associated responsibilities, along with any additional tasks possibly required. This document will be used to evaluate performance both during the probation period and after. If an employee is unsure of its contents, they should not hesitate to ask for clarification.

From time to time, it may be necessary to amend an employee’s job description. These amendments will be discussed with the employee in advance however; the final decision on implementation will be made by management.

Personnel File

CESD does collect personal information for inclusion in personnel files. This information is available to the employee and the Executive Director. This information is kept in a secure location, and is not shared with members of our Board or with our funders. Information which is contained in an employee’s personnel file includes the following: résumé, letter of offer, performance reviews, amendments to job descriptions, disciplinary notices, tax forms, copies of enrolment forms for benefits and approved leave requests.

Annual Salary

Salaries shall be determined by the Executive Director, based on budget considerations and commensurate with the experience of the successful candidate. The organization shall pay employees on a monthly basis, less the usual and necessary statutory and other deductions payable in accordance with the Employer’s standard payroll practices. These payroll practices may be changed from time to time at the Employer’s sole discretion. Currently, payday occurs the 25th of every month.

Professionalism

When representing CESD, staff should dress and behave appropriately. Employees should choose to dress in a manner which presents a professional image to the public and is respectful of others. Excessive use of profanity is neither professional nor respectful to co-workers and will not be tolerated.

Discipline

Discipline at CESD shall be progressive, depending on the nature of the problem. Its purpose is to identify unsatisfactory performance and / or unacceptable behaviour. The stages may be:

- i. Verbal reprimand
- ii. Written reprimand
- iii. Dismissal

Some circumstances may be serious enough that all three steps are not used. Some examples of these types of situations are theft, assault or wilful neglect of duty. In all cases, documentation should be included in the employees personnel file.

Hours of Work

The regular office hours for CESD are 10 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday inclusive (excluding holidays). During core hours, it is expected that most staff will be available. All employees are expected to work 7 hours per day, exclusive of an unpaid eating break of at least thirty (30) minutes. Employees may also be expected to work such other hours as may be requested or required, from time to time. Employees hired on a part time basis will have schedules determined on a case by case basis.

Employees are required to notify their supervisor, in advance, of planned days away from the office. Unplanned absences from the office should be reported to the employee’s supervisor as soon as could reasonably be expected. At the discretion of the Executive Director, depending on circumstances, employees may be allowed to work from home for specific periods of time. As a courtesy, the Administrative Assistant should also be notified of absences.

Statutory Holidays

The Republic of Azerbaijan has ten (10) public holidays and other days for which staff will be paid. They are:

- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| New Year’s Day | Eid ul-Fitr |
| Martyr’s Day | Festival of Sacrifices |
| Flower Day | International Women’s Day |
| Republic Day | National Salvation Day |
| International Solidarity Day | Spring Festival |

In the spirit of family, the Executive Director reserves the right to close the office between for the Spring Festival to enable employees to spend time with their families. This will be reviewed annually and will depend on operational requirements. These non-statutory days will have no impact on employee vacation or lieu time.

DEPARTURE

Termination for Cause

An Employment Contract may be terminated by the Employer at any time for cause, without notice or payment in lieu of notice or severance pay whatsoever, except payment of outstanding wages, overtime and vacation pay to the date of termination. Cause includes, but is not limited to, any act of dishonesty, conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality, harassment, insubordination, or careless, negligent or documented poor work performance.

Termination Without Cause

An Employment Contract may be terminated by the Employer at any time and for any reason on a without cause basis, upon the provision of notice or payment of notice instead, and severance pay if applicable. In addition to notice, the employee shall be entitled to an additional one (1) week's notice or payment in lieu of notice for every year of completed service (severance pay) with the Employer to a maximum of sixteen (16) weeks' notice. The notice as described in this paragraph is inclusive of all statutory and common law entitlements to notice or payment in lieu of notice. Upon satisfaction of the requirements under this paragraph, the Employer shall have satisfied any and all obligations to the employee. The notice requirement contained in this clause constitutes a material inducement to the Employer to enter this agreement.

Resignation

Employees must give the Employer two (2) weeks' notice of resignation. The Employer may waive the resignation notice period in whole or in part at any time by providing payment of regular wages for the period so waived.

Layoff

Operation requirements are subject to change based on workload and the funding levels received on an annual basis. All efforts will be made to keep staff in a position similar, in scope and salary, to that they have become accustomed to. If the organization is unable to do this, then employees will receive one (1) week notice for each year of service. For employees who have a minimum of six years of service, this amount will be augmented by one (1) week of severance pay (or equivalent notice) for each year of service.

Employer Property

Upon termination of employment for any reason, all items of any kind created or used pursuant to the employee's service or furnished by the Employer including but not limited to computers, reports, files, diskettes, manuals, literature, confidential information, or other materials shall remain and be considered the exclusive property of the Employer at all times, and shall be surrendered to the Executive Director, in good condition, promptly and without being requested to do so.

TIME AWAY FROM WORK

Vacation Time and Vacation Pay

Vacation will accumulate to a maximum of seven (7) days per calendar year. This type of leave should be taken in ½ day increments.

Sick Leave

Employees will be entitled to twelve (12) days of sick leave per calendar year accumulated on the basis of 1 day per month. A maximum of twelve (12) days of sick leave may be carried forward to the next calendar year so that an employee shall have no more than twenty (24) sick days in any one calendar year. Any additional sick leave accumulated will be forfeit. Moreover, regardless of the amount of sick leave accumulated, sick leave will not be paid out upon resignation, retirement, or termination of employment for any reason. Furthermore, since Sick Leave has no cash value, employees may not use more than they have accumulated, without the express written permission of the Executive Director. Employees working less than full time will have their rate of accumulation adjusted accordingly.

Sick leave can be used for personal illness, personal medical appointments, and visits to specialists.

The Employer reserves the right to request information with respect to limitations, restrictions, prognosis in such manner as it deems necessary in the circumstances with respect to any request for paid or unpaid sick leave. The employer also reserves the right to request a doctor's note for absences of three (3) days or longer.

Compassionate Leave

CESD will grant up to three (3) working days per event on the occasion of a death in the staff member's immediate family. Immediate family is defined as: parent(s), step parent(s), foster parent(s), sibling(s), grandparent(s), spouse (including common law a/o same sex partner), step child(ren) or ward of the staff member, father-in-law or mother-in-law (including parent of same sex partner).

Additional compassionate leave may be granted at the discretion of the Executive Director for reasons not covered elsewhere in this manual. These requests should be discussed in person with the ED and followed by a written submission.

Unpaid Leave

Employees may take unpaid leave with the written consent of the Executive Director. During periods of unpaid leave, medical, dental, life and AD&D coverage shall continue to be paid by the employer, vacation shall continue to accrue and seniority shall be maintained. Contributions to the group RRSP will occur strictly on a matching basis. If the employee makes a contribution. CESD shall match it; otherwise no contributions shall be made by the Organization. Every attempt will be made to return employees to a position of equal responsibility on return from leave status, however, no guarantees exists that the exact position left will be available on return.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

At the discretion of the Executive Director, employees may be able to attend conferences, courses, seminars and meetings, identified through annual workplans

and performance reviews, which may be beneficial to the employee's professional development. If these opportunities are directly related to the employee's position, or are suggested by the Executive Director, then CESD will cover the cost of registration, course materials and some travel expenses.

If CESD has agreed to pay for a course the fees will be paid on evidence of successful completion. If CESD sponsors a course (or courses) and the employee departs CESD within a year of completion, the course fees will become repayable in full.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Confidential Information

From time to time, employees of CESD may come into contact with confidential information, including but not limited to information about CESD's members, suppliers, finances and business plans. Employees are required to keep any such matters that may be disclosed to them or learned by them confidential.

Furthermore, any such confidential information, obtained through employment with CESD, must not be used by an employee for personal gain or to further an outside enterprise.

Intellectual Property

Any intellectual property, such as trademarks, copyrights and patents, and any work created by an employee in the course of employment at CESD shall be the property of CESD and the employee is deemed to have waived all rights in favour of CESD. Work, for the purpose of this policy refers to written, creative or media work. All source material used in presentation or written documents must be acknowledged.

IT Information Storage and Security

Any storage devices (CD's, USB's, Floppy Discs) used by employees at CESD, located at CESD's address, acknowledge that these devices and their contents are the property of CESD. Furthermore, it should be understood by employees, that company equipment should be used for company business only during normal working hours. Downloading of personal materials on company equipment can be harmful to said equipment and should not be done.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

CESD, along with its employees, must take reasonable precautions to ensure that the workplace is safe. The organization complies with all requirements for creating a healthy and safe workplace.

Employees who have health and safety concerns or identify potential hazards should contact the Executive Director.

Alcohol consumption or illegal drug use is not permitted during work hours on the premises. From time to time, with the Executive Director's permission, alcohol may be used to celebrate an occasion/event.

AIR QUALITY

Indoor air quality can lead to many health issues. CESD recognizes this and attempts to minimize the risks associated with indoor air quality and the effects on its employees. Issues pertaining to air quality should be reported to the Manager, Finance and Administration.

Smoke Free Environment

Smoking in the offices of CESD is not permitted at any time. An 'enclosed workplace' is defined as the inside of any place, building or structure or conveyance or a part of any of them that a) is covered by a roof or b) employees work in or frequent during the course of their employment whether or not they are acting in the course of their employment at the time, and c) is not primarily a private dwelling

Scents

CESD is aware that some persons may have allergies or sensitivities to perfumes, lotions, colognes and / or chemical smells. As a result, we discourage the overuse of these products.

Pets

The office of CESD is a place of business, and as such, pets are not welcome during normal working hours. Staff and visitors with seeing-eye dogs are the exception.

Renovations

As odors from building materials and noise levels for tools can cause discomfort to employees, renovations will be scheduled to have a minimum impact on employees. This may include renovating during non work hours (evenings & weekends) and ensuring direct ventilation to control fumes. Carpets should be installed and cloth furniture unwrapped late in the day so emissions may occur during non working hours.

HARRASSMENT

CESD wants to provide a harassment-free environment for its employees and volunteers. Mutual respect, along with cooperation and understanding, must be the basis of interaction between members and staff. CESD will neither tolerate nor condone behaviour that is likely to undermine the dignity or self-esteem of an individual, or create an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

There are several forms of harassment but all can be defined as any unwelcome action by any person, whether verbal or physical, on a single or repeated basis, which humiliates insults or degrades. "Unwelcome", for the purposes of this policy, refers to any action which the harasser knows or ought to reasonably know is not desired by the victim of the harassment.

Specifically, racial harassment is defined as any unwelcome comments, racist statements, slurs, jokes, graffiti or literature or pictures and posters which may intentionally or unintentionally offend another person.

Sexual harassment is any unwanted attention of a sexual nature such as remarks about appearance or personal life, offensive written or visual actions like graffiti or degrading pictures, physical contact of any kind, or sexual demands.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Workplace violence can be defined as a threat or an act of aggression resulting in physical or psychological damage, pain or injury to a worker, which arises during the course of work. Further to the definition of violence, is the definition of abuse. Abuse can be verbal, psychological or sexual in nature. Verbal abuse is the use of unwelcome, embarrassing, offensive, threatening or degrading comments. Psychological abuse is an act which provokes fear or diminishes a person's dignity or self-esteem. Finally, sexual abuse is any unwelcome verbal or physical advance or sexually explicit statement.

CESD has a zero tolerance limit with regards to harassment and violence. Employees or volunteers engaging in either harassing or violent activities will be subject to discipline, which may include termination of employment, removal from Boards or committees and possibly criminal charges.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Regrettably, conflict can occur in any working environment. In an effort to resolve conflict in an expedient, yet fair manner, CESD recommends the following process for conflict or dispute resolution.

- Speak to the person you are having the dispute with. Many times disputes arise due to misunderstandings and miscommunications.
- If speaking to the individual does not work, speak to the Executive Director. The ED will arrange a meeting between those involved in the dispute, to determine a resolution.
- If the ED is unable to resolve a workplace dispute, the parties may be referred to mediation by an outside third party. The resolution of the mediator is binding on both parties of the dispute.