**EMPOWERHOUSE  
Personnel Practices and Policies**

**Updated July 25, 2011**

**Foreword**

Empowerhouse is a public non-profit corporation established by a group of concerned citizens from the counties of Caroline, King George, Stafford, Spotsylvania, and the city of Fredericksburg. Empowerhouse is sup­ported by private contributions; local, state and federal funding; the Rappahannock United Way; and other grants. All services and facilities of Empowerhouse are available without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnicity, or gender identity or expression. Empowerhouse is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer.

Empowerhouse is dedicated to creating a diverse net­work of community members working together to promote safe relationships, homes, and com­munities. Empowerhouse empowers domestic violence survivors and their children to believe in them­selves and build new lives filled with dignity, respect, safety, and hope. Empowerhouse gives victims the time, space, and tools to heal their hearts, restore their connections, rebuild their lives, and renew their spirits. Empowerhouse breaks the cycle of violence through shelter, advocacy, education, awareness, prevention, and intervention.

All administrative employees, full or part time, should familiarize themselves with the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws in order that the purpose, objectives, and programs of Empowerhouse are understood.

Each employee is required to sign a statement that he/she has received a copy of this handbook, and accepts the policies and practices herein stated. This statement must be placed in the employee's personnel file.

Empowerhouse operates on a fiscal year from the first day of July to the thirtieth day of June.

1. **\* Appointment and Termination**

1.1. All appointments and terminations of staff shall be in accordance with the policies contained herein.

1. **\* Personnel Committee**

2.1. The Chair of the Board appoints Board Members to the Personnel Committee, which, in turn, recommends the appointment of the Executive Director to the Board of Directors and evaluates the Executive Director's performance. The Per­sonnel Committee reports to the Board on all personnel matters which require Board action and also functions in an advisory capacity to the Executive Director on personnel matters.

1. \* **Executive Director**

3.1. The Executive Director is responsible to the Board for the administration of the personnel policies and procedures. The Chair of the Board will generally repre­sent the Board.

1. **Recruitment and Employment of Staff**

4.1. The Personnel Committee is responsible for the recruitment and selection of the Executive Director. The Executive Director is responsible for the recruitment and selection of all other staff and has the authority to fire those who do not meet the expected standards of performance. The Executive Director may delegate these responsibilities to the Assistant Director.

4.2. All vacant positions are advertised in the news media unless filled by promotion or reassignment from within the organization. Positions will be advertised to the disability community and minority serving organizations via an announcement distributed to the Rappahannock United Way. Bilingual and bicultural staff will be recruited with every vacancy by adding language to recruitment announcements that requests this preferred skill. Copies of advertisements, interview documenta­tion, and hiring decisions will be maintained on file.

4.3. All applicants for positions will be informed of the action taken on their application as soon as possible.

4.4. All applicants for employment shall provide a resume, employment application, and any relevant personal and professional background information. Documents will be reviewed to determine the most qualified individuals eligible for an inter­view. The most qualified applicants will be interviewed using the same set of questions and by the same person(s) conducting the interviews for each interview conducted for any given position.

4.5. To be considered for employment, potential employees must assert that there has been a minimum of five years since conviction on a domestic violence charge or the issuance of a protective order.

4.6. All employees shall be notified in writing of appointment to their respective positions. Such notification will include the job description, salary, date of employ­ment, and other information as deemed appropriate by the Personnel Committee. A written response may be required of the appointee to close the process.

4.7. Continuation of Empowerhouse programs and positions is contingent on funding. Many positions are grant funded. Appointments provide no guarantee of continued em­ployment. New employees will be notified of this constraint at the time of hiring.

4.8. No employees shall serve in any capacity on the staff where they would be super­vised by a member of their own household or a close relative, except on an emer­gency or temporary basis.

4.9. In compliance with applicable federal and state regulations, Empowerhouse shall not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability ethnicity, or gender identity. This includes but is not limited to employment, promotion, demotion, transfers, recruitment, layoff, termination, compensation, training, or any related activities.

4.10. Each employee shall have a confidential personnel file containing initial employ­ment documents. Records may be added over time, including but not limited to personnel evaluations. Access to personnel files will be limited to the employee, the Executive Director, the Assistant Director, and the Finance and Development Coordinator.

4.11. Each job description is maintained on file.

4.12. Each new employee shall meet with the Finance and Development Coordinator for employee orientation. Each new employee shall attend the 40 hour volunteer training offered within three months of an employee's first day. Additional train­ing and orientation at both locations are provided by the Assistant Director or the supervisor under the supervision of the Assistant Director. The new employee and the Assistant Director shall monitor the progress of attendance and hours com­pleted in volunteer training through a log sheet provided. Additionally, each *new* employee shall read the staff handbook and accreditation book available at the outreach office.

**5. Employment Classification**

5.1. Full-Time*Salaried* Employees are employed to work forty hours per week, fifty two weeks per year and receive *a full benefits package* as defined by the board in accordance with the constraints of the Empowerhouse budget. The currently applicable *full benefits package* will be explained at the employee's orientation.

5.2. Part-Time *Salaried* Employees are employed to work less than eight hours per day, forty hours per week or are employed to work less than fifty-two weeks per year. They receive a *partial benefits package,* as defined by the Board in accor­dance with the constraints of the Empowerhouse budget. The currently applicable *partial benefits package* will be explained at the employee's orientation.

5.3. *Non-Salaried* Employees are paid per hour or per group session. They receive *no benefits.*

5.4. All paid positions shall be classified as "exempt" or "nonexempt" in keeping with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act for the purpose of determining eli­gibility for overtime pay. "Exempt" employees are not required to be paid over­time for work exceeding forty hours in a given work week. "Nonexempt" em­ployees are required to be paid overtime at one and one-half times the employee's regular pay rate for all hours worked which exceed forty hours in a given work week. Every job description shall contain a statement clearly defining each paid employee's position as "exempt" or "nonexempt." Non-mandatory seminars, staff training, fundraisers, and social events which occur after workday hours may not be counted toward overtime pay. *All nonexempt employees shall obtain written permission from their supervisor prior to working overtime.* Employees who re­ceive and use paid leave may not count these paid leave hours toward the compu­tation of overtime during a given week.

**6. Performance Evaluation**

6.1. Performance evaluations have a twofold purpose: to assist both the employer and the employee. Evaluations help the Personnel Committee, Executive Director, staff supervisors, and Board in reaching decisions regarding salary increases, promotions, and other matters. Evaluations also indicate the training needs of the staff. Evaluations reveal areas of strength and areas in which the employee should seek improvement. Performance ratings should be regarded as a form of construc­tive assistance to employees in the conduct of their duties. An employee's rating is confidential but may be shared with the Executive Director, Personnel Commit­tee, and Board of Directors.

6.2. Personnel performance will be reviewed annually by the Executive Director or immediate supervisor with more frequent evaluation provided for new employees. The Executive Director is evaluated by the Personnel Committee. Staff evalua­tions will be filed in the employee's personnel file.

6.3. The employee and the immediate supervisor (Personnel Committee in the case of the Executive Director) will review the employee's performance using the evalua­tion criteria noted below and any written reports prepared by the supervisor. In evaluating the performance of an employee, consideration shall be given to but is not restricted to the following factors:

Performance Factors:

Job Knowledge/Skills

Quality of Work

Productivity

Planning and Organizing

Record keeping/Documentation

Initiative

Conduct Factors.,

Reliability

Working Relationships

Observance of Agency Rules, Regulations, and Policies

Attendance

Confidentiality

6.4. If the supervisor determines that the employee's performance is unsatisfactory, every effort will be made to formulate a plan for improvement in order that the employee achieves a satisfactory rating in a timely manner as determined by the needs of the agency.

1. **Evaluation of New Employees**

7.1. All new employees shall be evaluated with increased frequency so as to enable the employee and the supervisor to assess the ability of the employee to perform the stated job duties.

**8. Termination of Employment**

8.1. A place exists within Empowerhouse for the conscientious and loyal worker, and it is the intention of the Board to encourage continued employment of such an employee. Nonetheless, employment at Empowerhouse is at will and may be terminated by Empowerhouse or the employee.

8.2. *Resignation.* A written notice of resignation must be submitted to the Executive Director two weeks in advance. A four-week written notice to the Personnel Committee is required for the resignation of the Executive Director. The written notice will be referred to the Chair of the Board.

8.3. *Termination of Employment.* The reasons for termination include but are not limited to failure to comply with any one of the performance and conduct factors identified in Section 6.c (above), or any one of the following:

8.3.1. Conviction of a felony charge or violent crime;

8.3.2. Continued or gross neglect of duty;

8.3.3. Admission of an act of sexual or domestic violence or a conviction of sex­ual or domestic violence;

8.3.4. Refusal to follow instructions;

8.3.5. Persistent violations of Empowerhouse policies and regulations;

8.3.6. Prolonged illness or disability that renders the employee incapable of per­forming essential functions of his/her position, even with reasonable ac­commodation by Empowerhouse;

8.3.7. Breaking Empowerhouse’s confidentiality policy.

8.4. The Executive Director, Assistant Director, or Personnel Committee shall inform an employee of his/her termination of employment.

8.5. Every employee facing termination of employment shall have the right of appeal to the Executive Director, Personnel Committee, and the Board of Directors.

**9. \* Grievance Procedure**

9.1. A grievance is defined as a circumstance or condition thought to be unjust and grounds for complaint or resentment, which may adversely affect an employee's effectiveness and harmonious relations within Empowerhouse.

9.2. Employees with a grievance should first discuss the matter informally with their supervisor with the intent of resolving the problem promptly and with mutual satisfaction.

9.3. If the informal approach fails, the employee should state the cause in writing to the Executive Director and request further discussion of the matter with the Ex­ecutive Director.

9.4. If the grievance remains unresolved, the employee may request consultation with the Personnel Committee. This request should be made in writing, addressed to the Chair of the Personnel Committee, and submitted to the Executive Director who will give the written request to the Chair of the Personnel Committee.

9.5. In the case of the Executive Director, the grievance is first made to the Personnel Committee in writing.

9.6. If the employee is still not satisfied with the decision reached by the Personnel

Committee, he/she may appeal in writing to the full Board of Directors. Such an appeal must be submitted five days prior to the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. The Board shall conduct a hearing with all parties present. The Board's decision shall be final.

9.7. No reprisals of any kind shall be taken by the Board, or any employee of Empowerhouse, against any party concerned in the grievance procedures.

**10.** **Compensation**

10.1.Salaries and/or other forms of compensation are set by the Board for all positions and reviewed periodically. The Board may authorize periodic cost of living in­creases; such authorizations shall be dependent upon funding.

10.2. Salary Deductions:

Federal Income Tax; FICA (Social Security); FICAM (Medicare); Virginia State Income Tax.

10.3. Optional Deductions:

10.3.1. Additional deductions will be made at the written request of an employee for employee elected benefits and payroll deductions (such as contribu­tions to the United Way).

10.4. Bonuses:

10.4.1. The Board of Directors may, at its discretion, and when financially feasi­ble, approve bonuses for staff. The Board must approve bonuses during regularly scheduled meetings.

**11. Length of Work Day**

11.1.The Empowerhouse Outreach Office operates between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Empowerhouse Shelter is a 24-hour facility and is staffed evenings, nights, weekends and holidays.

11.2. Outreach Office employees are allowed a 30-minute lunch break and are expected to complete their work during regular office hours.

11.3. Time sheets will be maintained by all employees on a daily basis and submitted to the Executive Director or immediate supervisor at the end of each pay period.

11.4. All nonexempt employees shall obtain written permission from their supervisor prior to working overtime.

11.5. Regardless of severe weather or other emergencies, all scheduled staff are re­quired to make a concerted effort to come to work safely and on time. Employees who are absolutely unable to do so must notify their supervisors by phone at least two hours in advance of their scheduled arrival time and must remain available to respond to additional phone calls and requests.

11.6. Any and all employees who are charged with "essential functions" (See Section 12) must ensure that the functions within their realm of responsibility are carried out. Any coordinators or other staff members who are experiencing challenges in fulfilling "essential functions" must immediately notify and consult with their su­pervisors in order to receive needed direction. Supervisors must promptly notify the Executive Director of all emerging problems.

11.7. The Executive Director shall have sole authority to:

Close the Empowerhouse Public Outreach Office;

Close the Shelter;

Allow the Shelter to remain unstaffed overnight — though may do so only when there are no residents;

Grant leave for salaried employees resulting from severe weather, other emergencies, safety and security issues, or requests for holiday time.

**Essential Functions**

12.1. Because of the nature of Empowerhouse's work, a number of "essential functions" must be maintained at all times -- including during holidays, periods of severe weather, and personal or public emergencies. These "essential functions" are often identi­fied in an employee's job description. Given the sometimes unpredictable nature of Empowerhouse's work, however, employees must stay alert and consult with their su­pervisors about possible additions to or changes in the "essential functions" for which they are responsible. Examples of these "essential functions" include, but are not limited to, the following:

Ensuring that payroll is processed on time;

Provision of on-site staffing of the Shelter for all shifts, especially the night shift;

Assessing and attending to any weather-related needs of Shelter residents;

Arranging for the Shelter parking area to be plowed as needed;

Shoveling and sprinkling sand or salt on walkways at the Shelter;

Issuing announcements of weather-related closings for group or training sessions as needed;

Re-scheduling appointments as needed;

Transporting new residents to the Shelter;

Fulfilling on-call responsibilities, including hospital accompaniment.

Other essential functions beyond those listed above may be identified by an employee's supervisor. Each employee is expected to learn and under­stand which of his or her duties are deemed "essential."

12.2. All employees who are charged with essential functions must ensure that the func­tions within their realm of responsibility are carried out even under difficult cir­cumstances and conditions. Any staff member who is experiencing challenges in fulfilling the essential functions for which he or she is responsible must immedi­ately notify and consult with the respective supervisor in order to receive guid­ance. Supervisors must promptly notify the Executive Director of all emerging problems. In addition, given the variable nature of the emergency situations with which Empowerhouse employees must deal, additional "essential functions" may arise. In such cases, the Executive Director will provide direction and guidance to employ­ees.

1. **Holidays**

13.1. Empowerhouse observes the following days as Holidays:

January the first day (New Year's Day)

January the third Monday (Martin Luther King's Birthday)

February the third Monday (George Washington's Birthday)

May the last Monday (Memorial Day)

July the fourth day (Independence Day)

September the first Monday (Labor Day)

October the second Monday (Columbus Day)

November the eleventh day (Veterans Day)

November the fourth Thursday (Thanksgiving Day)

Any Month two religious holidays of personal significance

* 1. Whenever the scheduled holiday falls on Saturday, the holiday will be observed on the Friday preceding. Whenever the scheduled holiday falls on Sunday, the holiday will be observed on the Monday following. Holidays falling during an employee's annual leave or sick leave will not be counted as annual or sick leave.

1. **Leave Policies** 14.1. Annual Leave

14.1.1. Each Full-Time Salaried employee is entitled to a specified number of days of annual leave per year depending on the employee's years of serv­ice with Empowerhouse.

Employees with less than two years of service will re­ceive 104 hours of annual leave (earned at a rate of 2 hours per week of work). Employees with two or more but less than five years of service will receive **156** hours of annual leave (earned at a rate of 3 hours **per** week of work). Employees with five or more years of service will receive 182 hours of annual leave (earned at a rate of 3.5 hours per week of work).

14.1.2. Leave must be earned before it can be taken. Leave balances may not ex­ceed the annual rate of accrual. Leave accrued in excess of that limit **will** be forfeited. Annual leave must be requested in advance and will be granted, as far as practical, at the times desired by the employees, but is also subject to the needs of the agency.

14.1.3 Each Part-Time Salaried employee will accrue annual leave in proportion to the number of hours they are hired to work and years of service with Empowerhouse.

14.2. Sick Leave

14.2.1. Any salaried employee shall be entitled to sick leave when it is needed for personal illness and physician or dental appointments. Sick leave may not be used as vacation leave. Sick leave is insurance for an employee should that employee become ill. The employee will continue to be paid during his/her absence, up to the number of accumulated sick days. Sick leave shall be computed on the basis of four (4) hours per pay period for Full-Time Salaried employees. Part-Time Salaried employees accrue sick leave in proportion to the number of hours they are hired to work. Sick leave may be accrued without any maximum limit. A doctor's certificate may be required to justify extended or frequent absences charged as sick leave. A limited amount of sick leave may be utilized at the discretion of the Ex­ecutive Director or Personnel Committee when a member of an em­ployee's immediate household is sick. There will be no reimbursement for unused sick leave.

14.3. Emergency Leave

14.3.1. In the event of a death in an employee's immediate family, an employee may be granted a reasonable amount of time off of work, which will be charged to the employee's sick leave (if available) or annual leave (if no sick leave is available). The amount of time will be determined by the Ex­ecutive Director or the Chair of the Board. Immediate family includes spouse, children, parents, grandparents, siblings, in-laws, or other persons living in the household.

14.4. Domestic violence and sexual violence

14.4.1. At Empowerhouse, we realize that employees who are victims of domestic or sex­ual violence have multiple and serious needs, some of which may require time away from work. We will work with employees who are victims of abuse to assess how existing paid and unpaid leave options may be used to help meet their needs.

14.4.2. In addition, victims of domestic or sexual violence may be considered for unpaid personal leave time, upon providing basic documentation of the need for this leave. Documentation includes any written statement evi­dencing the employee's use of victims' services, medical or professional treatment or services, social or faith-based services, law enforcement or legal proceedings or other actions or use of resources required to increase immediate safety. All written documentation will be kept strictly confidential and in a secured file separate from an employee's personnel file, ac­cessible to the employee, the Executive Director, the Assistant Director only.

14.5. Parental Leave

14.5.1. Employees may be granted up to two months leave for birth or adoption of a child, at the discretion of the Personnel Committee and with approval of the Board. Such leave will be given without pay, except for accumulated sick leave and annual leave.

14.6. Civil Leave

14.6.1. Regular compensation shall be granted without charge to either annual or sick leave for employees who are required to perform jury duty, provided any compensation received is turned over to EMPOWERHOUSE. If the reimbursement is more than the employee's regular salary, the employee may elect to take leave without pay or annual leave and keep the jury compensation. Court appearances in response to a subpoena will also be treated as civil leave.

14.7. Leave Sharing Policy

14.7.1. Employees may opt to donate any number of their hours of annual leave to another employee who has suffered a major life crisis (including but not limited to major surgery and chronic illness) and exhausted all sick leave and annual leave previously earned. The Executive Director shall deter­mine the eligibility of an employee for leave sharing. All salaried employ­ees will be given the opportunity to donate hours each pay period. Sick leave does not qualify for leave sharing.

14.8. Miscellaneous

14.8.1. Neither sick leave nor annual leave will be earned during periods of ex­tended leave or leave without pay.

14.9. Non-Salaried Employees

14.9.1. Non-Salaried Employees do not receive any paid holidays, annual leave, sick leave, emergency leave, civil leave, or parental leave. Such employ­ees have no re-employment rights. Such personnel working during regular daytime office hours will not be required to work on a Empowerhouse-recognized holiday.

**15. Benefits**

15.1. Medical Insurance

15.1.1. Premiums for Empowerhouse's group health plan will be paid in part or in full for each Full-Time Salaried employee, depending on the constraints of the Empowerhouse budget as determined by the Board. Additional family members may be added to the plan at the expense of the employee. The additional cost of family-member premiums will be deducted from the employee's regular pay.

15.1.2. Part-Time Salaried employees working more than 30 hours per week may opt to participate in the group insurance plan at their own expense. The full cost of the premium will be deducted from the employee's regular pay.

15.2. Retirement

15.2.1. A 403-B retirement plan is available for employees. The premium is paid entirely by the employee and participation is voluntary.

**16. \* Rules of Conduct**

16.1. Safety

16.1.1. The safety of employees and clients is of utmost concern to Empowerhouse. In addition to following the emergency procedures outlined in the Staff Handbook, all employees are to follow the following policies:

16.1.2. No employee will go to the home of a client where there is any possibility of an interaction between victim and abuser.

16.1.3. Law enforcement is to be called to respond to any direct or indirect threat of personal injury to an employee or client.

16.2. Accident

16.2.1. Any accident involving an employee or client is to be reported to the Ex­ecutive Director within the day, with a written Incident Report completed within 24 hours.

16.2.2. Injuries to employees may be covered under Workers' Compensation. In order to pursue the possibility of coverage, a verbal report must be made to the Executive Director at the time of injury, with a written report com­pleted within 24 hours.

16.3. Violence-Free Lifestyle

16.3.1. Employees will conduct themselves in a manner that is considered non­violent, non-threatening, and non-abusive. Physical violence and verbal and emotional abuse are prohibited. To be considered for employment, potential employees must assert that there has been a minimum of five years since convection on a domestic violence charge or the issuance of a protective order.

1. **Civic Activities**

17.1. In that Empowerhouse is a community program, staff members are encouraged to involve themselves in the civic affairs of the community through membership and partici­pation in community organizations. Also, because of the political origins of Empowerhouse's funding, each employee is encouraged to have a concerned interest in the political affairs at local, state and federal levels. Due to the federal funding re­straints, however, staff members must adhere to the Political Activity Policy.

1. **Political Activity Policy**

18.1. As an organization receiving funds from federal and state agencies, Empowerhouse must administer programs in a politically nonpartisan manner and must avoid actions which can reasonably be construed as intended to favor one political party over another or to influence the outcome of any election for public or party office. The use of program funds, provision of services, and the assignment of personnel must not result in the identification of the agency with any activity which is designed to influence the selection of an in­dividual for public or party office.

18.2. Employees of Empowerhouse may not engage in nonpartisan political activities while on duty or as a part of their job duty. Empowerhouse may not use program funds, provide services, or assign registration activity (including transporting voters or potential voters to the polls). As such, we are subject to the provisions of the Hatch Act.

18.3. As an employee of Empowerhouse you may:

Register to vote as you choose;

Express your opinions on political subjects and candidates;

Be a member of a party or political club, although you may not hold office or otherwise be active in party affairs;

Make voluntary contributions of money to a political campaign or party;

Participate in education efforts related to issues and the political process so long as this is done in a politically neutral manner;

Attend political meetings and rallies;

Wear a political badge or button;

Display a political sticker on your car;

Engage in non-partisan political activities, i.e. political activities associated with non-partisan elections, constitutional amendments, referenda, and approval of municipal ordinances;

* 1. As an employee you may not:

Use your official position, authority, or influence with Empowerhouse for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election or a nomination for a party or public office;

Directly or indirectly coerce or attempt to coerce an employee to pay, lend, or contribute to a party, committee organization, or person for political purposes; Use program funds for any partisan political purposes;

Permit the use of equipment or premises purchased or leased with program funds for any partisan political purpose;

Discriminate or threaten discrimination against or in favor of any employee or client of Empowerhouse or require any employee or client to disclose her political af­filiation;

Offer employment, promotion, or benefits under the program as a reward for po­litical support, except that employees may be deprived of employment or sub­ject to lesser penalties for engaging in activities which are forbidden by this policy;

Become a candidate for nomination or election to a political office or to a party office.

**19. \* Conflict of Interest**

19.1. Employees are committed to the highest of ethical standards in their relationship with clients, contractors, suppliers of services, and suppliers to Empowerhouse. Employ­ees, their immediate families, and business associates are prohibited from accept­ing payment or service from a client for personal gain or in exchange for favors or special preferences.

19.2. Empowerhouse may not obligate or spend agency funds to buy or rent goods, space, or services, or to provide direct financial assistance through investments, grants, loans, or loan guarantees, if an employee with the authority to make the purchase or arrange for the services, or a member of the employee's immediate family, has a substantial interest in the purchase, rental, or investment. Banking and other fi­nancial services, medical, legal, and other professional services and management and consultant services, as well as other kinds of labor are affected by this limita­tion.

19.3. It is the policy of Empowerhouse to purchase materials, supplies, and services, excepting personal service, in such a manner as to give full opportunity for free, open, and competitive bidding and to obtain maximum value for each dollar of expenditure. Purchases shall be made from the responsible supplier offering the lowest price unless it is deemed to be clearly in the interest of Empowerhouse by reason of ready avail­ability, compatibility, standardization, economy or efficient administration to pur­chase from another source than the lowest in price, or where it is impractical to secure meaningful competition. The full procurement policy shall be adhered to by the Executive Director and /or other purchasing agents.

1. **\* Confidentiality**

20.1. Federal and state requirements of complete confidentiality with individual clients must be maintained. Confidentiality standards are outlined in the Empowerhouse Confi­dentiality Policy.

20.2. The address or location of the Haven will, except with written authorization of the person or persons responsible for the operation of the Haven, not be made public.

1. **\* Professional Meetings/Trainings**
   1. Within the approved budgetary limits of Empowerhouse, staff attendance is encouraged for educational institutes, conferences, and specialty meetings that are mutually bene­ficial to the employee and Empowerhouse. Full-time salaried employees will be required to obtain forty hours per year of ongoing training. Part-time salaried employees will be required to obtain training proportional to the number hours per week worked. Attendance must be approved in advance by the Executive Director.
2. **Travel Expenses and Allowances**

22.1. Transportation costs incurred during the course of an employee's work responsi­bilities are reimbursable. The least expensive mode of transportation in accor­dance with both time and distance involved shall be selected. Where feasible, a receipted statement or bill is required when common carrier transportation is used. Thirty-five cents per mile is allowed when one's personal car is used, plus parking fees and tolls. A higher mileage figure may be set by action of the Board of Direc­tors.

1. **Personal Obligations**

23.1. Empowerhouse is required by law to accept garnishments of an employee's wages and to deduct from an employee's net pay, an amount stipulated to be paid by Empowerhouse to the creditor bringing the action. Being subject to garnishment cannot, by law, because to dismiss an employee.

1. **\* Drug-Free Workplace**

24.1. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a con­trolled substance by any employee in the Haven, office, or on the job is prohib­ited. Employees convicted of violating a criminal drug statute are to report the conviction to the Executive Director or Board of Directors within 10 days. Disci­plinary actions may include suspension, termination, or the requirement to attend rehabilitation.

1. **\* Domestic Violence and Sexual Violence**

25.1. Empowerhouse is committed to pro­viding information, resources and support for employees and management responding to employee disclosure regarding sexual and/or domestic violence concerns in order to create a safe and productive workplace. The organization will treat all employees fairly and will not discriminate against an employee in any employment related actions because an employee is perceived to be a victim of sexual and/or domestic violence. Our agency encourages employees to seek assis­tance and management to respond in an open-minded and respectful manner. Management will respect the employee's needs for confidentiality whenever pos­sible. However, management reserves the right to disclose limited information and take action when it is necessary to protect the safety of agency employees.

25.2. We strive to maintain a safe and secure workplace and do not tolerate any acts or threats of violence in the workplace. Furthermore, we do not tolerate any acts or threats of sexual and/or domestic violence against any employee while on our property or while conducting Empowerhouse's business. Employees who threaten, harass or abuse anyone either at the workplace or from the workplace, while conducting Empowerhouse's business and/or using any of Empowerhouse's property, such as computers, tele­phones, FAX machines, mail, vehicles or other means, may be subject to discipli­nary action, up to and including termination. In the event a past or current act of sexual or violent perpetration is disclosed by an employee, the employee will be interviewed by his or her supervisor. Depending on the level of risk posed by the offender to staff and/or clients, the employee may be put on immediate adminis­trative leave pending an investigation and resolution. Management (Executive Di­rector, Assistant Director, Finance and Development Coordinator) will respect the employee's need for confidentiality whenever possible. However, management reserves the right to disclose limited information and take action when it is neces­sary to protect the safety of agency employees and/or clients.

25.3. Employees who become aware of threats or acts of sexual and/or domestic vio­lence that may occur or have occurred in the workplace must immediately inform their supervisor/manager. In addition, employees with Orders of Protection or re­straining orders that reference the worksite(s) of Empowerhouse must provide the supervisor/manager with a copy of the order. In response to possible threats, man­agement, Executive Director or the personnel committee will undertake an as­sessment of the risk and implement a safety response plan specific to the circum­stances of the threat, implementing security options to minimize the risk. This plan will take into consideration the needs and the rights of a targeted employee and others in the worksite, maintaining confidentiality when to do so does not in­terfere with safety needs.

25.4. At Empowerhouse, employees are encouraged to inform management when performance problems arise that are directly related to a sexual and/or domestic violence con­cern. In response to such disclosure, managers will provide an employee with in­formation about internal and external resources that the employee can choose to access for assistance. Managers will also work with

employees to determine if any accommodations, such as available leave time or workplace safety precau­tions, are needed. Managers are to consult with the Executive Director to deter­mine if a performance contract, specifying a time period to gain assistance prior to continuing with disciplinary action, is appropriate for the employee's situation.

25.5. Internal resources include an available advocate of choice or the Finance and De­velopment Coordinator. External resources may be obtained through either inter­nal resources or the manager may inform the employee of the Statewide Family Violence and Sexual Assault Hotline 800-838-8238 and the National Domestic Violence Hotline 800-799-SAFE.

26. \* **Sexual Harassment**

26.1. Empowerhouse is committed to maintaining a workplace that is free from discriminatory harassment. Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature when:

26.2. Submission to such conduct is made (explicitly or implicitly) a term or condition of the individual's employment;

26.3. Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting the individual; or

26.4. The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with the indi­vidual's job performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

26.5. If you believe that you have been subject to sexual harassment by a co-worker, supervisor, volunteer, client, or by anyone else during the course of your employ­ment, please report your concerns immediately to your supervisor or the Execu­tive Director or the Chair of the Board of Directors. Retaliation against an em­ployee by any person under Empowerhouse's control for opposing such harassment, for filing a bona fide complaint of sexual harassment, or for providing information in good faith regarding another employee's complaint will not be tolerated.

26.6. Once a complaint of sexual harassment has been filed, an investigation will be conducted. The nature and extent of the investigation will depend upon the com­plaint. The intent is to obtain further information about the events/conduct com­plained of, to enable the person named in the complaint to tell their side of the story, to determine whether sexual harassment has in fact occurred, and to develop an appropriate resolution. You may be asked to put your complaint in writing, or the person with whom you discuss your complaint may take notes and ask you to sign them. All employees are expected to cooperate with any Empowerhouse-sponsored investigation of a complaint of sexual harassment, upon request of their supervi­sor.

26.7. Any employee who is determined to have committed sexual harassment or retalia­tion or who fails to cooperate with an Empowerhouse-sponsored investigation of sexual harassment or retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

26.8. Empowerhouse is also committed to maintaining a workplace free of other types of dis­criminatory harassment based on race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnicity, or gender identity. Any type of dis­criminatory harassment will be treated in accordance with the harassment policy outlined above.

27. **Procurement Policy**

27.1. It is the policy of Empowerhouse to purchase materials, supplies, and services, excepting personal service, in such a manner as to give full opportunity for free, open, and competitive bidding and to obtain maximum value for each dollar of expenditure. Purchases shall be made from the responsible supplier offering the lowest price unless it is deemed to be clearly in the best interest of Empowerhouse by reason of ready availability, compatibility, stan­dardization, economy, or efficient administration to purchase from another source than the lowest in price, or where it is impractical to secure meaningful competi­tion.

27.2. The Regular Purchasing Agents, for the purpose of this policy, shall be the Execu­tive Director and the Treasurer.

27.3. The Regular Purchasing Agents may make cash purchases of up to $50.00 using a petty cash voucher. Receipts must be attached to the petty cash voucher.

27.4. Purchases between $50.00 and $1,000.00 may be made in the open market after such inquiry as the Regular Purchasing Agent shall deem appropriate.

27.5. Purchases in excess of $1,000.00 up to $5,000.00 may be made by the Regular Purchasing Agent only after three inquiries have been made and documented.

27.6. One time purchases or term contracts in excess of $5,000.00 may be made by the Regular Purchasing Agent after a circular letter stating Empowerhouse's needs and invit­ing quotations has been sent to a significant number of firms to assure, if possible, that Empowerhouse receives at least three responsible bids for the desired items.

27.7. The Regular Purchasing Agent may waive the bidding procedure if there is an emergency that permits no delay because of the possibility of personal injury, de­struction, or damage to property.

27.8. The conflict of interest policy shall be adhered to during the procurement process.

**28. Policies That Apply to Volunteers/Interns** *(Note that sections above marked with an asterisk also apply to volunteers/interns)*

28.1. Recruitment of Volunteers/Interns

28.1.1. The Governance Committee of the Board of Directors with the help of the Executive Director is responsible for recruitment and selection of all vol­unteer board members and committee members. The Assistant Director/ Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for the recruitment and selection of all other volunteers.

28.1.2. The volunteer recruitment procedure is on file in with the Assistant Director/Volunteer Coordinator.

28.1.3. The Board recruitment and training procedure is on file with the Executive Director.

28.2. Screening Volunteers/Interns

28.2.1. The Assistant Director/Volunteer Coordinator checks four references for each volunteer/intern. The volunteer/intern is responsible for obtaining two written references on a form provided by Empowerhouse.

Two references are listed on the application. The Assistant Director interviews each volunteer/ intern, in-person, and obtains a criminal background check. The volunteer/ intern signs the ethical commitment and confidentiality assurance during the interview. The volunteer training is 40 hours and provides an opportu­nity for all staff to further identify the readiness of each volunteer for di­rect service.

28.3. Orientation Volunteers/Interns

28.3.1. Prospective volunteers/interns shall be interviewed by the Assistant Direc­tor/ Volunteer Coordinator who will cover agency services, policies and procedures. A tour and introduction to the outreach office staff will be in­cluded in this interview. Further orientation occurs during training when the volunteers/interns spend one evening at the shelter and during the final day of training when volunteers/interns are recruited and choose to be as­signed to specific jobs and supervisors. Volunteer job descriptions for each position are on file and include designation of volunteer service level and training requirements for each position

28.4. Supervision Volunteers/Interns

28.4.1. Each volunteer/intern is supervised by the program staff member in the program in which the volunteer/intern is serving. An evaluation sheet and log of hours volunteered should be turned in to the Assistant Director/ Volunteer Coordinator for the volunteer's file at the end of each completed task or monthly. Supervision meetings occur as needed with the Assistant Director/Volunteer Coordinator who is the administrative supervisor of all volunteer/interns, ensuring that training is completed, hours are logged, support is provided and evaluations occur.

28.5. Recognition of Volunteers/Interns

28.5.1. A yearly application will be given out to the staff members to evaluate and nominate the 'Volunteer of the Year'. During the volunteer's time with the agency the volunteers will be included in staff outings such as lunches, field trips and training sessions. E-mail announcements will be sent by the Assistant Director/Volunteer Coordinator informing volunteers regularly of opportunities. Other possible recognitions include write-ups in the agency newsletter, ice cream socials, book clubs, training completion cer­tificates, thank you letters, birthday cards, and applications to outside rec­ognition awards such as the United Way, the Action Alliance, and the Chamber of Commerce.

28.6. Training Volunteers/Interns

28.6.1. All new volunteers must meet with the Assistant Director/Volunteer Coor­dinator for volunteer orientation. Each new volunteer generally will com­mit to attending the 40 hour volunteer training offered three times per year. (Less training will be required for Level I and Level II volunteers as noted below and will be offered through attending portions of the 40 hour volun­teer training.) Additional training and orientation to both locations is pro­vided by the Assistant Director/Volunteer Coordinator or the supervisor under the supervision of the Assistant Director. The new volunteer and the Assistant Director/Volunteer Coordinator will monitor the progress of at­tending all topics and hours provided in volunteer training through a log sheet. In-service training opportunities will be offered 5 times per year, organized and implemented by the Assistant Director/Volunteer Coordinator.

LEVEL I Administrative: copying, filing, gathering supplies for the shel­ter or shelter residents and sorting donations.

LEVEL II Health fairs, transportation, booth sitters and child care pro­viders.

LEVEL III Hotline workers, court and other accompaniment, shelter vol­unteers, trainers, support group facilitators, speakers at local organiza­tions and companion services.

28.7. Evaluation Volunteer/Intern

28.7.1. The Performance Evaluation serves both the agency and the volunteer/ intern to assess their value and needs within the area each has chosen to become involved. The evaluation also will indicate the training strengths as well as areas in which the volunteer /intern may need improvement. The performance evaluation should be regarded as a form of constructive assis­tance to the volunteer/intern in the performance of his/her duties. The evaluation will be kept in the volunteer/intern's confidential file that may be seen by the volunteer/intern, the Assistant Director/ Volunteer Coordi­nator and/or the Executive Director.

28.7.2. Performance will be reviewed once a month for a new volunteer/intern after which the evaluation process will revert to every three months by the Assistant Director/Volunteer Coordinator together with the immediate su­pervisor of the particular volunteer/intern.

28.7.3. The volunteer/intern and the immediate supervisor each will review the volunteer/intern's performance using evaluation criteria and any written reports from the Assistant Director/Volunteer Coordinator.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the volunteer/intern.

Performance Factors:

Job knowledge/skills

Quality of work

Productivity

Planning/Organizing

Record keeping/documentation

Initiative

Conduct Factors:

Reliability

Working relationships

Observance of Agency Rules, Regulations and Policies

Attendance

Confidentiality

28.7.4. If the immediate supervisor or the Assistant Director/Volunteer Coordina­tor determines the volunteer/intern's performance is unsatisfactory, every effort will be made to formulate a plan for improvement in order that the volunteer/intern achieves a satisfactory rating in a timely manner as de­termined by the needs of the agency. A plan should be determined by the Assistant Director/Volunteer Coordinator, the immediate supervisor, and the volunteer/intern to improve performance after which an evaluation will take place every two weeks. This plan will be in writing and signed by all three parties.

28.7.5. Should the volunteer/intern not improve performance by the second evaluation a determination should be made by the Assistant Director/ Volunteer Coordinator and the immediate supervisor whether to proceed with disciplinary action including but not limited to termination of service.

28.8. Disciplinary Action — Volunteer/Intern

28.8.1. Empowerhouse recognizes the importance of the conscientious and loyal volun­teer/ intern and it is the intention of the Board and the Staff to encourage such efforts unless continued service is believed to be against the best in­terest of Empowerhouse.

28.8.2. If a need for disciplinary action should be determined by the immediate supervisor, the Volunteer Coordinator or the Executive Director, a written report shall be made and discussed with the volunteer/intern and the su­pervisor. All parties shall sign this document and it shall be kept by the Assistant Director/Volunteer Coordinator with the confidential volunteer/ intern files.

28.9. Termination of Volunteer/Intern Service

28.9.1. Reasons for termination of volunteer service include but are not limited to failure to comply with any one of the performance and conduct factors listed above, OR any one of the following:

Conviction of a felony charge or violent crime;

Admission of an act of sexual or domestic violence or conviction of sexual or domestic violence;

Continued or gross neglect of duty;

Refusal to follow instructions;

Persistent violations of Empowerhouse policies and regulations;

Breaking Empowerhouse's confidentiality policy.

28.10. The Assistant Director/Volunteer Coordinator, with the assistance of the immedi­ate supervisor, will notify the volunteer/intern of his/her termination from duties.