



Employee Personnel Manual

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At-Will Employment Policy

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten does not offer tenure or any other form of guaranteed employment. Either TeamString I Am Not Forgotten or the employee can terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without cause, with or without notice. This is called at-will employment.

This at-will employment relationship exists regardless of any other written statements or policies contained in this Handbook or any other organizational documents or any verbal statement to the contrary.

Progressive Discipline and At-Will Employment:

While TeamString I Am Not Forgotten may elect to follow its progressive discipline procedure, the organization is in no way obligated to do so. Using progressive discipline is at the sole discretion of the organization in an employment-at-will workplace.

Exceptions to the At-Will Employment Policy:

No one except TeamString I Am Not Forgotten's Executive Director can enter into any kind of employment relationship or agreement that is contrary to the previous statement. To be enforceable, such relationship or agreement must be in writing, signed by the Executive Director, and notarized.

Employment Standards & Workplace Expectations

Attendance Policy

The purpose of this policy is to clarify guidelines for employees attendance, unscheduled absences and punctuality. TEAMSTRING is committed to maintaining reliable operations and delivering consistent, high-quality services. Regular attendance and punctuality are essential to operational effectiveness and teamwork.

Policy Guidelines

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time employees:

- Employees are expected to report to work on time, remain present for their full scheduled shift, and return from meal and rest breaks as scheduled.
- All non-exempt employees must accurately record all time worked. Working off the clock or during unpaid meal periods without authorization is prohibited.
- Exempt employees will not be subject to improper salary deductions except as permitted by law.
- Employees must follow established call-off and notification procedures for planned and unplanned absences.
- Attendance concerns may be addressed under the Progressive Discipline Policy or Job Abandonment Policy, as applicable.
- Supervisors may exercise reasonable discretion consistent with this policy, subject to review by Human Resources.
- Absences covered under legally protected leave will not be considered unexcused and will not result in adverse action.

Unscheduled Absences

- Unscheduled or excessive same-day call offs will be considered a performance concern addressed in accordance with the organization's Progressive Discipline Policy.
- Employees are expected to notify their supervisor as soon as practicable and no later than their scheduled start time when an unscheduled absence occurs.
- Employees may be required to provide reasonable documentation for extended or patterned absences, consistent with applicable law.

Accountability & Culture Policy

At TeamString I Am Not Forgotten, kindness is not a slogan—it's a daily commitment. We exist to feed our neighbors who are facing hardship by providing **fresh food every day, free of charge**, with dignity and care. Our culture is built on service, reliability, and excellence: we show up on time, we do what we say we will do, and we treat every person we serve with

respect. We believe that small acts—prepared well and done consistently—create real change. Every role matter, every shift counts, and every interaction is an opportunity to lead with compassion.

Purpose

TEAMSTRING promotes accountability, professionalism, and respect to support its mission and values. TEAMSTRING’s culture rests on timeliness, accountability, service, excellence and professionalism. We hire individuals who demonstrate alignment with our values and service standards, in addition to the skills required for the role. Our culture shapes how we serve our community and how we work together as a team.

Policy Guidelines

This policy applies to all full-time and part-time employees. **Employees are expected to:**

- **Demonstrate reliability and timeliness** (report as scheduled; communicate delays promptly).
- **Communicate professionally and respectfully** with clients, partners, and teammates.
- **Follow supervisor direction and organizational procedures**, including safety and food-handling standards where applicable.
- **Maintain confidentiality** and use good judgment with internal and client information.
- **Support teamwork and service excellence** by contributing to a positive, mission-centered work environment.
- Failure to meet conduct expectations may result in corrective action under the Progressive Discipline Policy.
- Supervisors may exercise reasonable discretion consistent with this policy, subject to review by Human Resources.
- TEAMSTRING reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, or discontinue this policy at any time, subject to applicable law.

Workplace Conduct and Legal Compliance Policy

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten (TEAMSTRING) is committed to a workplace that is safe, lawful, respectful, and free from harassment, intimidation, and hostility. This policy establishes clear expectations for employee conduct and compliance with all applicable laws and organizational standards.

A. Compliance with Laws and Regulations

All employees must comply with all federal, state, and local laws and regulations at all times, including while on TEAMSTRING premises, during work hours, when working remotely, or when representing TEAMSTRING at community events.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Smoke Free Illinois Act and any local no-smoking or no-vaping ordinances.
- Drug-Free Workplace Act, including prohibitions on illegal drug or alcohol use.
- Occupational safety and health standards.

- Labor, wage, and anti-discrimination laws.

Any illegal activity on TEAMSTRING premises or while representing TEAMSTRING will result in immediate disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and may be reported to law enforcement.

B. Respectful Treatment of All People

TEAMSTRING expects every employee to treat colleagues, clients, partners, volunteers, and community members with dignity and respect.

Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Bullying or Intimidation – verbal, physical, digital, or social behaviors that demean, threaten, or isolate others.
- Arguing, Yelling, or Hostile Confrontation – including aggressive debates or heated disputes that disrupt operations or create fear.
- Harassment or Discrimination – based on any protected characteristic, as defined in TEAMSTRING’s Nondiscrimination and Harassment policies.
- Retaliation – against anyone who reports a concern or participates in an investigation.

Employees are expected to listen respectfully, de-escalate conflict, and seek supervisory or HR support to resolve disagreements.

C. Professional Conduct and Integrity

To maintain trust and accountability, employees must:

- Perform job duties honestly and responsibly, avoiding theft, fraud, or misuse of funds, equipment, or confidential information.
- Use professional language and tone in all communications, including email, text, and social media.
- Follow all TEAMSTRING policies on attendance, cell phone use, social media, and confidentiality.

D. Workplace Safety and Prohibited Activities

For the safety of everyone, employees must:

- Refrain from violence, threats, or possession of weapons on TEAMSTRING property or at TEAMSTRING-sponsored events.
- Avoid conduct that jeopardizes health or safety, such as horseplay, reckless behavior, or willful neglect of safety procedures.
- Never smoke, vape, or use e-cigarettes inside TEAMSTRING facilities, vehicles, or other areas prohibited by law.

E. Reporting and Accountability

- Duty to Report: Employees must promptly report suspected violations of this policy, any illegal activity, or safety concerns to their supervisor and HR.
- Investigation: All reports will be reviewed promptly, fairly, and confidentially to the extent possible.
- Consequences: Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination and, where applicable, referral to law enforcement.

F. No Retaliation

Retaliation against any individual who, in good faith, reports a concern or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in discipline.

Dress Code (Business Casual, Community-Ready)

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten promotes a relaxed and approachable workplace, while maintaining clear standards for appropriate appearance. All employees are expected to dress in a way that reflects professionalism, cleanliness, and respect for the people and communities we serve — including youth, families, donors, and partner organizations.

General Appearance Standards

All employees, interns, and volunteers must wear clothing that is:

- Clean, neat, and in good repair
- Modest and appropriate for a community-facing role
- Not distracting, offensive, or revealing

Clothing must allow for full coverage of the body when standing, sitting, or moving, and may not display offensive language, images, or symbols.

Prohibited Attire

The following items are not allowed during work hours or work-related events:

- Leggings or tights worn as pants (unless covered by a tunic-length top or dress to mid-thigh).
- See-through or sheer clothing that reveals undergarments or their color.
- Sagging pants or any bottoms worn below the waistline.
- Excessive cleavage, halter tops, tube tops, crop tops, or backless shirts.
- Visible undergarments of any kind, including straps, waistbands, or bra lines.
- Pajamas, sleepwear, loungewear, or slippers.
- Bonnets, do-rags, or hair wraps intended for sleeping or personal grooming.
- Clothing with drug, alcohol, violence, or inappropriate graphics/language.
- Excessively tight, short, revealing, or form-fitting garments.
- Clothing that emits strong odors (e.g., smoke, sweat, or heavy fragrances).

Shorts & Skirts Length Standard

Shorts and skirts must extend **below the fingertips** when standing with arms relaxed at your sides.

Footwear Expectations

- Closed-toe shoes are required during food service, outreach, or field work.
- No slippers, house shoes, or footwear intended for lounging or sleep.

Organization-Branded or Mission-Aligned Clothing

Clothing with TeamString I Am Not Forgotten logo is encouraged. Attire representing schools, service organizations, or community partners is also acceptable, as long as it aligns with TEAMSTRING's values and is otherwise appropriate.

Hygiene and Grooming

All staff must maintain:

- Cleanliness and personal hygiene
- Hair and clothing that are clean and well-kept
- Fragrance use is moderate, due to potential sensitivities

Enforcement

Supervisors have discretion to address violations. Employees may be sent home to change their attire if attire is inappropriate. Repeated violations will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

If you're unsure whether something is acceptable, ask your supervisor before wearing it to work.

Personal Cell Phone or Similar Device Policy

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten recognizes that personal devices are part of modern life, but we expect employees to use them responsibly without disrupting their duties, team, or the people we serve.

To maintain a safe, focused, and respectful work environment, the following rules apply to all staff while on the clock or participating in TEAMSTRING events or activities.

General Use Policy

- Personal cell phones and similar devices must be used minimally and appropriately during work hours.
- Use of personal devices is not permitted while actively working, unless for a work-related function or with prior supervisor approval.
- Employees may use personal phones on scheduled breaks or lunch only.

Prohibited Use During Work Hours

Unless explicitly authorized by a supervisor, the following are not allowed while working:

- Watching videos, streaming shows, or using any video-based apps
- Listening to music, podcasts, or audio content on your phone
- Wearing earbuds, headphones, AirPods, or any device that obstructs hearing
- Engaging in calls, social media, texting, or browsing unrelated to job duties

All employees must remain alert, fully attentive, and able to hear instructions or always communicate with colleagues and clients.

Distraction-Free Zones

The use of personal audio or video devices is strictly prohibited in:

- Food preparation areas
- Youth spaces or program delivery zones
- Community events or public-facing engagements
- Meetings or collaborative work sessions

Driving Policy

Use of a cell phone — for calls, texts, GPS, or any reason — while driving for TEAMSTRING-related business is strictly prohibited, even hands-free. Employees must pull over to a safe location before using a phone or similar device.

Disciplinary Consequences

Inappropriate or excessive use of a personal device may result in:

- A verbal or written warning
- Loss of phone privileges during work hours
- Termination, in cases of repeated violations or when use causes disruption, safety risk, or failure to meet job responsibilities

Supervisor Discretion

Supervisors may grant limited exceptions to this policy, based on an employee's role, work setting, or specific assignment. This may include:

- Allowing the use of personal music (e.g., Spotify, Apple Music) during individual tasks that are not client-facing, do not require constant communication, and do not pose safety risks.
- Temporary use of headphones for a specific task (e.g., data entry, inventory) where focus is improved and operational needs are met.

All approved exceptions must be:

- Explicitly communicated by the supervisor
- Revocable at any time based on performance, behavior, or operational changes
- Used in a way that does not impair awareness, hearing, safety, or team collaboration

Internet & Email Policy

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten provides internet and email access to support professional responsibilities, communication, and service delivery. To maintain security, productivity, and alignment with our mission, all internet and email use must support business-related purposes only.

Permitted Use

- Internet access during work hours — whether using a company-owned device or a personal device connected to the organization's Wi-Fi — must be strictly for business use.
- Examples of acceptable use:
 - Research and communication related to TEAMSTRING programs
 - Grant writing, reporting, or administrative work
 - Accessing shared drives, email, scheduling, or approved platforms
- Employees may access non-work websites only during designated breaks, and only on personal devices not connected to the TEAMSTRING network.

Prohibited Use

The following activities are not permitted on TEAMSTRING time or using TEAMSTRING systems or internet access:

- Streaming videos, browsing social media, or listening to music for personal entertainment
- Checking or sending personal email
- Accessing inappropriate, offensive, or non-work-related websites
- Downloading unauthorized software, media, or files
- Transmitting confidential or sensitive data through unsecured methods

Note: Personal phone use for music, video, or social media during work hours is not allowed unless explicitly approved (see Cell Phone Policy).

Company-Owned Equipment & Monitoring

- All devices and systems issued by TEAMSTRING are considered company property.
- TEAMSTRING reserves the right to monitor internet usage, emails, and files stored or transmitted using company resources.
- There is no expectation of privacy when using company equipment, systems, or internet access.

Security & Confidentiality

Employees must:

- Avoid sharing passwords or accessing restricted systems without authorization.
- Use only TEAMSTRING-approved software and tools.
- Refrain from using public Wi-Fi or unsecured networks to access confidential information.

Violations & Discipline

Any violation of this policy — including unauthorized browsing, personal use during work hours, or accessing inappropriate content — may result in:

- Loss of system privileges
- Written warnings or performance action
- Termination of employment, depending on severity

Blogging & Social Media Policy

Social media and digital platforms are powerful tools for connection, storytelling, and public engagement. At TeamString I Am Not Forgotten, we encourage thoughtful, responsible, and respectful online participation — especially when our name, programs, staff, or partners are mentioned.

This policy outlines expectations for employee conduct on public platforms to protect individual privacy, uphold TEAMSTRING's reputation, and prevent misuse of organizational content or voice.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to:

- Blogs, personal websites, video-sharing platforms, and public forums.
- All social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X/Twitter, LinkedIn, Threads, etc.).
- Comments or content shared about TEAMSTRING programs, events, employees, or stakeholders — whether shared during or outside work hours.

Core Guidelines for Employees

If You Post About TEAMSTRING

- You must identify yourself as an employee and clearly state that your views are your own, not official TEAMSTRING statements.
- Unless you are explicitly authorized, you may not speak on behalf of TeamString I Am Not Forgotten.
- You are encouraged to be honest, respectful, and professional in your tone and content.

What Not to Share

- Do not disclose confidential, private, or proprietary information (e.g., unreleased initiatives, financial data, personnel matters).
- Do not share photos or videos of clients, minors, or participants without written authorization and/or a signed media release.
- Do not use TEAMSTRING's logo, name, or brand to sell or promote outside products or services without approval.
- Avoid sharing or engaging with content that is discriminatory, harassing, defamatory, pornographic, or that may create a hostile work environment.

Respect and Responsibility

- Speak respectfully about colleagues, community partners, and the organization — even in disagreement.
- Remember that what you post publicly reflects on you and, potentially, on TEAMSTRING.
- Honor coworkers' privacy — don't share stories, images, or internal happenings without their consent.

Legal Accountability

- You are personally liable for any content you post online.
- Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- Harassment, defamation, or hostile online conduct may result in legal consequences beyond employment.

Media and Press Inquiries

If you're contacted by the media about TEAMSTRING programs, employees, or positions:

- Do not respond directly.
- Direct the inquiry to the Chief Executive Officer or designated communications lead.

Our Values Online

We believe in using our voices to uplift, not harm. Employees are encouraged to participate in digital spaces that reflect TEAMSTRING's values of kindness, equity, and community care. Your social presence matters — both in protecting our mission and amplifying its impact.

Fraternization Policy

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten is committed to maintaining a respectful, professional, and productive work environment. Personal relationships at work can affect morale, decision-making, and perceptions of fairness. This policy sets boundaries to protect the integrity of our workplace and prevent real or perceived conflicts of interest.

Romantic or Intimate Relationships

Employees are expected to avoid any romantic or intimate relationships that:

- Involve a direct or indirect reporting relationship (supervisors, leadership, board members, or managers).
- Create a conflict of interest, favoritism, or the perception of preferential treatment.

Employees in a managerial or supervisory role may not engage in romantic relationships with any employee whose terms or conditions of employment (including promotion, discipline, scheduling, or compensation) influence directly or indirectly.

Peer-to-Peer Relationships

Romantic relationships between peers are not prohibited, but must be:

- Disclosed to the employee's supervisor or Human Resources.
- Managed to ensure there is no disruption to the work environment or team performance.
- Free from any conduct that could be perceived as exclusionary, distracting, or inappropriate at work.

Failure to disclose a peer relationship that later impacts the team may lead to disciplinary action.

Unprofessional Behavior and Conflict

Regardless of reporting structure, employees in any romantic relationship, close friendship, or otherwise — must:

- Always maintain professional conduct while at work or representing TEAMSTRING.
- Avoid behaviors that make others uncomfortable or affect productivity.
- Avoid using work time, systems, or resources for relationship-related communication or activity.

Reporting and Accountability

Employees who feel uncomfortable due to another employee's personal relationship at work are encouraged to speak with Human Resources. Violations of this policy — including failure to disclose, inappropriate conduct, or disruptions to the workplace — may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Remote Work & Flexible Work Policy

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten supports flexible work arrangements that promote well-being, equity, and productivity, while maintaining the integrity of our services, operations, and mission.

Eligibility & Approval

Remote and hybrid work options may be approved for eligible positions and employees, based on:

- Nature of the role and responsibilities.
- Employee performance and reliability.
- Team coverage and delivery needs.
- All remote work arrangements must be approved by the employee's supervisor in consultation with Human Resources. Executive-level positions may require Chief Executive Officer approval. Approval may be revoked or adjusted at any time based on business or performance needs.

Employee Expectations While Working Remotely

Employees working remotely are expected to:

- Maintain regular work hours and be available during scheduled times.
- Communicate clearly and promptly with supervisors, clients, and coworkers.
- Submit all work in a timely, accurate, and professional manner.
- Adhere to all organization policies, including those governing confidentiality, timekeeping, harassment, dress code (for video meetings), and professional conduct.

Remote Work Environment Requirements

To ensure effectiveness and privacy while working remotely, employees must:

- Have access to a reliable high-speed internet connection.
- Have a safe, private, and reasonably distracting-free space to perform work duties.
- Use a desktop or laptop with working audio and video capabilities for meetings.
- Comply with all IT security protocols (e.g., VPN use, password protection).

Employees may use their own devices if approved by their supervisor or be issued organization-owned equipment as needed.

Data Protection & Confidentiality

Employees must always protect sensitive organizational data while working remotely. This includes:

- Locking computers when away from the screen.
- Avoiding work in public/shared environments where confidential information may be seen or overheard.
- Not sharing access to organization platforms or email with household members or others.

Violation of these expectations may result in disciplinary action.

Flexible Work Hours

Employees may request modified start/end times or split shifts to accommodate caregiving,

health, or transportation needs. These must be approved by a supervisor and must not interfere with job performance, responsiveness, or team coordination.

Review and Adjustments

Remote and flexible work arrangements will be reviewed periodically and may be modified or ended at any time based on performance, operational needs, or organizational changes.

Performance Management & Discipline

Progressive Discipline Policy

The purpose of this policy is to clarify guidelines for employee conduct and to outline appropriate disciplinary steps when there are performance or other issues. Employment with TEAMSTRING is "at will," which means it is subject to termination by either TEAMSTRING or the employee at any time for any reason. Nothing in this policy provides any contractual rights regarding employee discipline or counseling, nor should anything in this policy be read or construed as modifying or altering the employment-at-will relationship between TEAMSTRING and its employees. This policy applies to all employees (full-time and part-time).

HR is always available to both employees and supervisors as a resource when clarification or additional information about policies, practices, or procedures is needed.

Discipline will be applied consistently and without discrimination or retaliation and supervisors should keep discipline discussions private.

Responsibilities of Employees

It is the duty and the responsibility of every TEAMSTRING employee to be aware of and abide by existing policies and work rules. Employees must also perform their duties to the best of their ability, by the standards outlined in your job description or otherwise established. Employees are encouraged to take advantage of all learning opportunities available and to request additional instruction when needed.

Responsibilities of Supervisors

The immediate supervisor should objectively approach corrective measures.

Suppose the employee's performance of assigned tasks is the issue. In that case, the supervisor should confirm that proper instructions, appropriate orientation, and adequate training were issued and that the employee is aware of job expectations. Both single incidents and patterns of poor performance should be of concern.

If misconduct is the issue, the supervisor should ensure that the employee knows the organization's policies and regulations regarding employee conduct. If, in either case, appropriate

instruction or information was not communicated, the supervisor should immediately develop a plan for delivering instructions or a written report to review with the employee.

Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with employee rights under applicable law, including legally protected leave or reasonable accommodations. HR must be consulted when a performance or attendance issue may be related to protected leave, disability, or medical restrictions.

Procedure

Step One: Verbal Warning

A verbal warning occurs when a supervisor verbally counsels an employee about an issue of concern. A written record of the discussion, noting the date, event, names of those involved in the discussion, and recommended action, is placed in the employee's personnel file for future reference. The supervisor can use their discretion, whether it should be one or two verbal warnings, depending on the severity of the situation and type of issue, before proceeding to a written warning. For instance, if the supervisor notices that the employee's behavior has not shown any change, the supervisor should proceed to a second verbal warning.

Within three (3) to five (5) business days, the supervisor should prepare written documentation of the verbal counseling and notify HR. Employee signature acknowledges receipt, not agreement. If the employee refuses to sign, the supervisor will note the refusal, and a witness may sign to confirm delivery.

A 'verbal warning' is a documented coaching/counseling conversation.

Step Two: Written Warning

A written warning is used for behavior or performance that a supervisor considers serious or when a verbal warning has not helped change unacceptable behavior or performance. The supervisor can use their discretion, whether it should be one or two written warnings based on the individual's pattern of behavior or performance, before moving to the next step.

A PIP can follow a written warning. The PIP requiring the employee's immediate corrective action **should generally be issued within five (5) business days** of the Step Two written warning meeting.

The supervisor should provide a written warning to the employee before setting up the counseling and PIP session with details highlighting the performance, attendance, or behavior consistently demonstrated by the employee. The supervisor must consult with HR on drafting the written warning to avoid language that does not apply to the situation. All written warnings should be specific to the employee's behavior or work performance issues.

Step Three: Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

The supervisor can decide to place the employee on a performance improvement plan (PIP) not to exceed 60 days. HR will serve as a guide on the best timeframe for each PIP. Within this period, the employee must demonstrate a willingness and ability to meet and maintain the conduct and work requirements specified by the supervisor and the organization and meet all requirements outlined in the PIP. The supervisor and employee should meet regularly to assess the progress of the PIP. If the employee has met the goals and expectations described in the PIP, the supervisor will document that he or she has completed the PIP.

The supervisor must use the PIP to clearly describe any performance, behavior, or attendance problem, outline specific improvements needed, and provide a timeframe for progress. A PIP may be used when HR and the supervisor determine it is appropriate based on the role, severity, and pattern of concerns. Depending on circumstances, steps may be accelerated or combined.

If the PIP is necessary based on the supervisor's recommendation, the supervisor must enforce the PIP to improve unsatisfactory employee performance, attendance, or behavior. Each step in the process is documented in the Performance Improvement Plan.

Depending on severity, the organization may implement a PIP at any stage or bypass steps, consistent with HR guidance.

PIP/Counseling Process

Before the Counseling session, the supervisor should complete the PIP. During the Counseling session, the supervisor should:

- Provide the employee with a copy of the PIP.
- Clearly and concisely, explain the performance issue(s) that need to be improved, providing examples as necessary for clarity. Supervisors must use the PIP template from HR.
- Communicate expectations for change, including the timeframe to meet the expectations outlined in the PIP, PIPs may include 15-, 30-, and/or 60-day checkpoints. Most PIPs will not exceed 60 days unless HR approves an extension based on circumstances.
- Answer any questions and address concerns by the employee.
- The supervisor and employee should agree upon a date and time to meet to review progress. This can be once a week but may vary depending on circumstances.
- Clearly state the consequences for not meeting the objectives of the PIP.
- If the employee has questions or would like to share additional information, the supervisor should advise the employee to contact HR within one (1) week of the meeting.
- The supervisor should place a copy of the Counseling and PIP in their file and with HR. The supervisor must update HR on the Counseling/PIP within five business days.
- HR must be consulted during the preparation of the PIP and the Counseling session to issue the PIP.

- Timeframes in this policy are intended as guidelines and may be adjusted based on operational needs and circumstances.

If established goals are not met, dismissal may occur.

Step Four: Termination of Employment

If Termination of Employment appears warranted, as described in the Performance Improvement Plan, the supervisor must consult with HR to thoroughly review the circumstances and all related documentation. The supervisor should discuss with all the appropriate individuals the necessary steps for separation of employment with all completed documents (verbal warning, written warnings, and PIP).

The Chief Executive Officer makes the final decision upon recommendation and documentation review by Human Resources.

Once approved by Human Resources, the supervisor should complete a termination letter to be reviewed and submitted by HR. This letter will include the specific behaviors/reason (s) for the Termination of Employment, the effective date of termination, and applicable information regarding final pay, the continuation of benefits, preliminary retirement plan distribution, and any other matters deemed appropriate.

Performance and Conduct Issues Not Subject to Progressive Discipline

Illegal behavior is not subject to progressive discipline and may result in immediate termination. Depending upon the unlawful conduct, it may be reported to local law enforcement authorities.

Also, theft, intoxication or impairment at work, fighting, and other acts of violence at work are not subject to progressive discipline and may be grounds for immediate termination.

Possession, use, or impairment by alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, or violation of the organization's drug and alcohol policy, may result in immediate termination (See Drug & Alcohol policy).

Supervisor's Judgment

Many supervisors will have different situations dealing with an employee. The PIP should be used based on your professional judgment of the employee's performance/behavior, such as, but not limited to, is there actual performance or behavioral issue that can be substantiated? Describe the consistent patterns and behaviors or inconsistent work commitments in the PIP and highlight how you see the PIP as a support or structure to assist the employee with improving.

TEAMSTRING reserves the right to administer appropriate disciplinary action for all forms of disruptive or inappropriate behavior. Each situation will be dealt with on an individual basis.

TEAMSTRING reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, or discontinue this policy at any time, subject to applicable law.

Job Abandonment Policy

This policy defines job abandonment and establishes procedures for addressing extended or unreported absences. This policy applies to all full-time and part-time employees.

Policy Guidelines

Job abandonment occurs when an employee fails to report to work for two or more consecutive scheduled workdays without reasonable notice.

- TEAMSTRING will make reasonable attempts to contact the employees and will consider emergency circumstances. Reasonable attempts to contact the employee may include phone calls, emails, text messages, or emergency contact outreach, as appropriate.
- Job abandonment may result in termination following HR review.
- Supervisors may exercise reasonable discretion consistent with this policy, subject to review by Human Resources.
- Employees are responsible for notifying their supervisor as soon as practicable if they are unable to report to work.
- Absences covered under legally protected leave will not be considered job abandonment.
- This policy operates in coordination with the Attendance Policy and Progressive Discipline Policy.
- Job abandonment determinations will be made based on scheduled workdays, not calendar days.
- All job abandonment determinations will be documented and maintained in the employee's personnel file.

Compensation, Time Off & Leave

Paid Time Off (PTO) & Leave Policy

TEAMSTRING provides Paid Time Off and leave options to support employee well-being while ensuring operational continuity and legal compliance. The purpose of this policy is to clarify guidelines for employees attendance and leave usage. The aim is to encourage work-life balance and personal care for all employees. TEAMSTRING provides up to forty (40) hours of PTO per year in compliance with the Illinois PTO for All Workers Act.

Policy Guidelines

- This policy applies to all eligible full-time and part-time employees working in Illinois, consistent with applicable state and federal law.
- PTO may be used for vacation, personal, or qualifying reasons in accordance with organizational procedures.
- Paid Time Off is administered in compliance with Illinois law, including the Illinois PTO for All Workers Act, and applicable federal laws.
- Absences covered under legally protected leave will not be considered unexcused and will not result in adverse action.
- Supervisors may exercise reasonable discretion consistent with this policy, subject to review by Human Resources.
- Payment of unused PTO at separation will be handled in accordance with applicable Illinois law and organizational policy in effect at the time of separation.
- PTO does not guarantee continued employment and does not alter the at-will employment relationship.
- PTO off does not roll over from year to year. The forty (40) hours is front-loaded annually in compliance with Illinois law.
- Non-exempt employees must accurately record all time worked when using PTO. PTO may not be used to avoid overtime reporting requirements.
- All employees are given 40 hours of paid time off upon employment. PTO is available for use following completion of any applicable introductory period, consistent with Illinois law.
- When PTO is exhausted, additional time off may be requested and may be designated as unpaid or protected leave, including FMLA where applicable. Employees should contact Human Resources to determine eligibility.
- Questions regarding this policy or leave eligibility should be directed to Human Resources.

Request / Approval Process

Employees must follow the steps below if they intend to take leave under this policy:

- Employees should submit a paid time off request form to their supervisor 10-days or as far in advance as possible to allow TEAMSTRING to arrange for coverage if necessary.
- Obtain approval from your supervisor. If you take more than two weeks off at a time, HR may require additional consideration, planning, and coordination with your supervisor.
- Requests will be reviewed and approved based on various factors, including the timing of the requested absence; staffing levels (e.g., how many other people have already asked to be off at the same time); and TEAMSTRING's operational demands. Employees should not make travel arrangements until they receive official notification that their requests have been approved.

- Employees should post their time off dates on TEAMSTRING's electronic calendar and put an out-of-office message on their emails and voicemails, letting people know whom to contact during their absences.
- Requests for PTO will be handled in accordance with applicable law. Nothing in this policy is intended to interfere with an employee's right to use PTO as provided by Illinois law
- Ensure you have provided your supervisor with all the appropriate project schedules, contact persons, and email addresses.

As is the case with all policies, TEAMSTRING reserves the right to interpret, modify, suspend, or discontinue this policy at any time, subject to applicable law.

Bereavement Policy

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten provides bereavement leave to support employees in mourning the loss of a loved one, managing funeral arrangements, or tending to affairs related to a death.

Bereavement Leave for an Immediate Family Member

When a death occurs in an employee's immediate family, all regular full-time employees may take up to four (4) days off with pay, and part-time employees may take up to two (2) days off with pay to attend the funeral or make arrangements.

Bereavement leave is available to regular full-time and part-time employees who have completed at least 30 days of employment.

The pay for time off will be prorated for part-time employees if the funeral occurs on a scheduled workday. TeamString I Am Not Forgotten may, in unusual circumstances, require verification of the need for the bereavement leave.

Immediate family includes spouse or partner, parent, stepparent, child, stepchild, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, parent-in-law, sibling-in-law, child-in-law, or any person who legally stood in place of a parent or guardian.

Additional Time Off

Up to four (4) additional unpaid days may be granted based on circumstances such as travel distance, funeral responsibilities, or estate management. Employees should communicate such needs as soon as possible to allow for proper scheduling.

Mental Health Policy

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten is committed to fostering a workplace where mental health is recognized, respected, and supported. We view mental well-being as essential to the overall health, productivity, and dignity of all team members.

This policy outlines our commitment to promoting mental wellness, supporting employees experiencing mental health challenges, and complying with all relevant legal protections.

Policy Statement

Mental health conditions are treated with the same respect and seriousness as physical health conditions. Employees may use accrued Paid Time Off (PTO), Sick Leave, or approved unpaid leave to manage mental health needs, including but not limited to:

- Attending therapy or counseling appointments.
- Taking time for acute emotional or psychological distress.
- Managing symptoms of depression, anxiety, PTSD, or other mental health diagnoses.

No medical diagnosis is required to use PTO for short-term mental health reasons. All employee requests are treated with confidentiality and care.

Extended Leave & Job Protection

If a mental health-related absence exceeds three (3) consecutive workdays, the employee may be required to submit documentation from a licensed provider. At this point, the following steps apply:

- Human Resources will determine eligibility and coordinate with leadership as appropriate whether the leave qualifies under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) or as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- If qualified, the employee's job will be held in accordance with applicable legal protections.
- If the employee does not maintain contact and fails to return by an agreed-upon date without requesting an extension, the absence may be classified as job abandonment after a review by HR.

Roles and Responsibilities

To ensure a supportive culture and appropriate implementation of this policy:

Leadership and Management

- Promote a workplace culture that de-stigmatizes mental health.
- Respond with care and discretion to employee concerns.
- Work to facilitate reasonable accommodation and return-to-work plans.
- Maintain, communicate, and review this policy for legal compliance and relevance.
- Ensure accommodations align with the ADA, HIPAA, OSHA, and Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA).
- Coordinate any required documentation or interactive processes for leave.

- Provide training and educational resources to staff and managers.

Employees

- They are encouraged to proactively care for their own mental health.
- May request support without fear of retaliation.
- Are responsible for participating in conversations about accommodation or performance if needed.
- Should report mental health-related harassment or discrimination to HR or leadership.

Confidentiality

Mental health-related disclosures and medical documentation will be maintained in separate, confidential personnel files, in full compliance with HIPAA and applicable state privacy laws.

Non-Retaliation

Employees will not be discriminated against or retaliated against for requesting mental health accommodation, using leave, or disclosing a mental health condition in good faith.

[Pregnancy, Childbirth & Related Conditions \(PWFA/Title VII\) Accommodation Policy](#)

TEAMSTRING will provide reasonable accommodations for known limitations related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, absent undue hardship, consistent with federal law (including the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act). Employees may request accommodations through HR; the interactive process and confidentiality apply.

- Examples: additional breaks, permission to sit/stand, light duty, schedule changes, temporary job restructuring, time off for health care appointments.

[Lactation Accommodation Policy](#)

All parents who chest feed their child, and who need to express milk during the working day, will work with their supervisor to determine how best to accommodate the needs of the parent while still accomplishing the job performance.

- **Time for Lactation Accommodation:** Supervisors may consider flexible working arrangements. Parents may use their break and lunchtime to express milk. Breaks to express milk should not last longer than 45 minutes. If an employee needs to take more than two breaks during the workday to express milk, the employee will need to use personal time (lunch, PTO, and so on).
- **The Environment for Lactation Accommodation:** TeamString I Am Not Forgotten will work with each nursing parent to determine a private area in which they may express milk. Milk should be placed in cooler-type containers and maybe stored in company refrigerators.

Reporting Discrimination

Any employee who believes they have experienced or witnessed discrimination, bias, or harassment should promptly report the matter to:

- Their supervisor or program manager
- Human Resources

All reports will be handled confidentially, investigated as needed, and resolved with fairness and accountability.

Equal Employment & Workplace Protections

Nondiscrimination Policy

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten (TEAMSTRING) is an equal opportunity employer. We are committed to building a workplace that is diverse, inclusive, and free from discrimination in all aspects of employment.

TEAMSTRING prohibits discrimination and harassment against any employee, applicant, volunteer, intern, or contractor based on:

- Race or ethnicity
- National origin or immigration status
- Religion or creed
- Gender, sex, gender identity, or gender expression
- Sexual orientation
- Age
- Disability or medical condition
- Pregnancy or parenting status
- Marital or veteran status
- Genetic information
- Any other status protected by federal, state, or local law

Employment Practices

This policy applies to:

- Recruitment, hiring, and onboarding
- Job assignment, training, and promotion
- Compensation, benefits, and working conditions
- Discipline, evaluation, and termination

All decisions must be made based on merit, qualifications, and organizational need.

Language Access and Accessibility

TEAMSTRING will make reasonable efforts to provide accessible communication and interpretation services when needed. Employees are encouraged to request accommodation or support to fully participate in TEAMSTRING programs and activities.

Workplace Harassment Policy

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten is committed to a workplace free of harassment, discrimination, intimidation, and retaliation. Harassment in any form — whether verbal, physical, visual, or digital — is strictly prohibited.

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, interns (paid or unpaid), volunteers, clients, vendors, and anyone acting on behalf of TeamString I Am Not Forgotten, regardless of work location.

What Is Harassment?

Harassment includes any unwelcome conduct — verbal, physical, written, or visual — that is based on:

- Race or ethnicity
- Religion or creed
- Gender or sex (including sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression)
- Age
- Disability or medical condition
- National origin or ancestry
- Pregnancy or parenting status
- Marital or veteran status
- Any other status protected by law

Examples of prohibited conduct include:

- Derogatory slurs, jokes, or comments
- Visual displays (e.g., offensive cartoons, symbols, images)
- Unwanted touching, sexual advances, or suggestive remarks
- Threats, intimidation, bullying, or verbal abuse
- Mocking or isolating someone based on appearance, accent, or personal identity

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes unwanted sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that:

- Interferes with an individual's ability to do their job
- Creating a hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment

- Is made a condition of employment or used as the basis for decisions (e.g., promotion, pay, or termination)

Sexual harassment may occur regardless of gender or sexual orientation and includes same-gender or non-romantic harassment.

Reporting Harassment

Any employee who experiences or witnesses harassment is encouraged to report it immediately to:

- Their supervisor or program manager
- Human Resources

No formal written complaint is required. Reports may be verbal, emailed, or submitted anonymously where possible. The sooner an issue is reported, the sooner TEAMSTRING can respond.

Investigation and Response

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten will promptly and thoroughly investigate all complaints of harassment. All parties involved will be treated with dignity and fairness, and confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible.

Corrective action will be taken when harassment is found — up to and including termination of employment or contract.

No Retaliation

Retaliation against any individual who makes a good faith complaint or participates in an investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.

Responsibility of Supervisors and Leadership

Supervisors and leadership staff are required to:

- Report any complaint or observation of potential harassment
- Cooperate with investigations
- Take appropriate steps to prevent harassment from continuing

Failure to act may result in disciplinary consequences.

Equal Pay & Compensation Non-Discrimination Policy

TEAMSTRING prohibits compensation discrimination based on sex and other protected characteristics. Compensation decisions will be based on legitimate, documented factors such as skills, experience, performance, responsibilities, market data, and business needs. Employees may discuss or inquire about wages as permitted by law.

Genetic Information Nondiscrimination (GINA) & Confidentiality Policy

TEAMSTRING will not use, request, require, or purchase genetic information (including family medical history) except as allowed by law. If genetic information is inadvertently received, TEAMSTRING will not use it in employment decisions and will maintain it as confidential medical records in separate, restricted files. Supervisors and HR will include safe-harbor language when seeking medical information to avoid acquiring genetic data.

Religious Accommodation Policy

TEAMSTRING will provide reasonable accommodations for sincerely held religious beliefs, practices, or observances unless doing so causes undue hardship. Employees should contact HR as soon as the need arises; TEAMSTRING will engage in an interactive process and implement effective accommodation where feasible.

- Examples: flexible scheduling, swaps, voluntary shift changes, exceptions to dress/grooming policies where safe.

Workplace Accommodation For Disabilities

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten is committed to providing equal employment opportunities to qualified individuals with disabilities and to creating a workplace that is inclusive, accessible, and supportive. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and applicable state and local laws, we will provide reasonable accommodations to employees and applicants with known physical or mental disabilities unless doing so would cause an undue hardship.

What Is Disability?

A disability is defined as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Mobility or sensory impairments
- Mental health conditions
- Chronic illnesses
- Neurodivergence
- Temporary conditions that limit a major life activity

Requesting Accommodation

Employees who need workplace accommodation should contact HR to begin the interactive process. Requests can be made:

- Verbally or in writing
- In person, by email, or by phone

Employees will be asked to complete a Disability Accommodation Request Form and may need to submit supporting documentation from a licensed healthcare provider.

Interactive Process

Once a request is received, HR will:

1. Review the request and documentation.
2. Engage in a good-faith conversation with the employee to understand the need.
3. Determine what, if any, reasonable accommodation can be provided based on job duties and operational needs.

Accommodation may include:

- Adjusted work schedules or duties
- Modified workspaces
- Assistive technology
- Leave of absence
- Reassignment to an open position

Each request is considered on a **case-by-case basis**.

Undue Hardship and Limitations

Accommodation will be provided unless they:

- Cause significant difficulty or expense
- Possess health or safety risk
- Alter the essential functions of the position

TEAMSTRING may explore alternative accommodation if the requested one presents an undue hardship.

Confidentiality

All medical information and documentation related to accommodation requests will be kept confidential and stored separately from personnel files, in accordance with ADA and HIPAA guidelines.

Annual Review

Accommodation may be reviewed annually or as needed. TEAMSTRING may request updated medical information to confirm that an ongoing need exists.

Anti-Retaliation

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten strictly prohibits retaliation against any employee for requesting accommodation, participating in the interactive process, or filing a related complaint. Any concerns should be reported directly to HR.

Safety, Security & Compliance

Workplace Violence Policy

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten is committed to maintaining a workplace that is free from threats, intimidation, and acts of violence. We maintain a zero-tolerance policy for any form of workplace violence or behavior that compromises employee safety and well-being.

This policy applies to all employees, interns, contractors, volunteers, clients, and visitors.

Definition of Workplace Violence

Workplace violence includes, but is not limited to:

- Physical acts of aggression, assault, or threats of physical harm
- Verbal abuse such as yelling, threats, slurs, or hostile language
- Psychological intimidation or bullying that causes fear or distress
- Sexual harassment or physical contact without consent
- Damage to property or sabotage of work
- Possession or concealment of a weapon on company property (unless otherwise legally authorized and disclosed)

Reporting Violent Behavior

All employees are encouraged — and expected — to report any of the following:

- Threats or actual violence
- Suspicious or threatening behavior
- Possession of a weapon on TEAMSTRING property or at a work event
- Behavior that causes fear for safety or disrupts work

Reports should be made immediately to Human Resources and the employee's supervisor. If HR is unavailable or involved in the matter, contact the Chief Executive Officer.

Reports may also be made anonymously or in writing when possible. TEAMSTRING will protect the confidentiality of the reporter to the extent possible.

Investigation and Response

All reports will be promptly investigated. TeamString I Am Not Forgotten may take interim actions to ensure safety, such as:

- Separating involved parties
- Reassigning duties temporarily
- Contacting authorities if needed

If workplace violence is substantiated, disciplinary action will be taken up to and including termination of employment or removal from volunteer/service roles.

No Retaliation

Any employee who reports violence or threatening behavior in good faith is protected from retaliation. Retaliation may result in additional disciplinary action.

Workplace Safety Measures

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten reserves the right to conduct inspections and take additional measures to maintain a safe work environment, including:

- Reviewing building access procedures
- Providing staff support or mediation
- Involving law enforcement if appropriate

Drug and Alcohol Policy

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten is committed to providing a safe, productive, and high-quality work environment. Alcohol and drug misuse pose serious risks to employee health, organizational integrity, and community safety. In compliance with the **Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988**, TeamString I Am Not Forgotten prohibits the use of drugs or alcohol in the workplace or while representing the organization.

Employees are expected to report to work **fit for duty**, free of any substance that impairs their ability to perform job duties safely and effectively.

Prohibited Conduct

The following activities are strictly prohibited on all TEAMSTRING property or while conducting any work-related activity:

- Use, possession, sale, distribution, or manufacture of illegal drugs or drug paraphernalia.
- Use or possession of alcohol while on duty or on company premises (including events).
- Reporting to work or performing duties under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Misuse of prescription or over-the-counter medications that impair performance or judgment.
- Refusal to cooperate with required testing procedures.

The presence of any detectable level of alcohol or illegal drugs in an employee's system during work hours is a policy violation, regardless of intent or circumstances.

Voluntary Assistance and Support

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten supports employees who seek help before becoming subject to discipline. Employees may use accrued PTO or request leave of absence to seek treatment. Voluntary disclosure of a substance use problem will be handled with discretion and may include:

- Referral to treatment providers
- Leave for rehabilitation (if applicable under FMLA or ADA)
- Return-to-work support and follow-up

Once a drug or alcohol test has been initiated for suspected use, voluntary disclosure will not exempt the employee from the disciplinary process.

Drug and Alcohol Testing

A. Reasonable Suspicion Testing

Testing may be required if a supervisor, in consultation with HR, observes behavior consistent with impairment. Observations may include:

- Slurred speech, confusion, or physical unsteadiness
- Odor of alcohol or drugs
- Mood swings, aggression, or drowsiness
- Possession of substances or paraphernalia

Employees must report for testing within **two hours** of being notified. Refusal is treated as a positive result.

B. Post-Accident Testing

Testing is mandatory after any workplace accident that results in:

- Injury requiring offsite medical care
- Damage to company equipment or vehicles
- Potential legal or insurance risk

Employees must not drive themselves to testing facilities. Transportation will be arranged by the organization.

Consequences of Policy Violations

Any of the following may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination:

- Refusal to submit to testing
- Tampering with or attempting to alter test results
- Positive test result for illegal substances
- Being under the influence during work-related activity
- Violating return-to-work or last-chance agreements

TEAMSTRING may offer a one-time last-chance agreement in its discretion. This may include mandatory rehabilitation, regular testing, and a signed waiver of further rights to contest termination in the case of a future violation.

Employees suspended pending test results will be paid for time missed if the results are negative.

Confidentiality

All information related to drug and alcohol testing or treatment will be:

- Stored securely and separately from personnel files
- Accessed only by authorized personnel
- Disclosed only when required by law, with written consent, or in defense of legal claims

Legal and Criminal Violations

- Employees must not engage in any drug-related activity on company time or premises.
- Employees convicted of a drug-related offense (on or off duty) must notify TEAMSTRING within five days of the conviction.
- Violations may be reported to law enforcement when appropriate.

Definitions

- Under the Influence (Alcohol): A blood alcohol content of .04 or greater, or observable signs of impairment.
- Under the Influence (Drugs): A confirmed positive drug test or behavioral indicators of impairment.
- Illegal Drug: Any substance prohibited by federal law that is not being legally used under a valid prescription.
- Refusal to Cooperate: Includes failure to test, leaving a testing site without permission, providing tampered samples, or refusing to sign testing documents.

Whistleblower Protection Policy

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten (TEAMSTRING) is committed to integrity, transparency, and accountability. Employees, volunteers, contractors, interns, and board members are encouraged to report any activity or behavior they reasonably believe violates laws, regulations, or TEAMSTRING policy.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Financial misconduct or fraud
- Ethical violations
- Conflicts of interest
- Unsafe practices or gross mismanagement
- Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation

Reporting Concerns

Concerns should be reported to HR. If the concern involves Human Resources or executive leadership, the report may be made directly to the Board Chair. Reports may be made:

- In person
- In writing
- Anonymously (when feasible)

No formal evidence is required to report a concern — a good faith belief is sufficient.

No Retaliation

TEAMSTRING strictly prohibits retaliation against anyone who:

- Reports on a concern in good faith
- Participates in an investigation
- Refuses to participate in a suspected violation

Any act of retaliation will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Investigation and Confidentiality

All reports will be promptly reviewed and, if necessary, investigated. TEAMSTRING will take reasonable steps to:

- Maintain confidentiality
- Ensure fair treatment
- Prevent interference or bias

The individual who raised the concern may be informed of the outcome to an extent appropriate and permitted by law.

False Reports

Any employee who knowingly makes a false accusation may be subject to disciplinary action. However, honest mistakes will not result in penalty.

Retaliation Prohibited

TEAMSTRING will not tolerate retaliation against any employee for filing a complaint, requesting accommodation, or participating in an investigation. Anyone engaging in retaliation will face corrective action, up to and including termination.

Reporting, Investigations & Governance

EEO Complaint Reporting & Investigation Procedure

TEAMSTRING provides multiple avenues to report concerns—no chain-of-command requirement. Reports may be verbal or written.

- Employees should report concerns to Human Resources. If the complaint involves Human Resources, the report may be made directly to the Chief Executive Officer. If the complaint involves the Chief Executive Officer, the report may be made directly to the Board Chair.

- Include: who, what, when, where, witnesses, and any documents.
- Process: prompt, neutral investigation; findings communicated as appropriate; corrective action taken if policy is violated; confidentiality to the extent possible.
- No retaliation against any individual for reporting or participating in an investigation.

Training & Supervisor Responsibilities

All staff receive periodic training on EEO, anti-harassment, and retaliation prevention. Supervisors receive enhanced training on duty to act, handling complaints, preventing retaliation, and documentation.

- Supervisors must report concerns immediately to HR.
- Failure to take appropriate action may result in discipline.

Notices & Posting Compliance

TEAMSTRING will display the most current federal and applicable state EEO notices (including the EEOC 'Know Your Rights: Workplace Discrimination is Illegal' poster) in a conspicuous location at each worksite and provide electronic access for remote employees. HR is responsible for monitoring updates and replacing postings when laws change.

Recordkeeping & Confidentiality

TEAMSTRING will retain EEO-related records (applications, postings, personnel actions, investigations, accommodation documentation) in accordance with federal and state retention requirements. Medical and accommodation records will be maintained separately from personnel files with limited access.

Personnel File Access Policy

TeamString I Am Not Forgotten is committed to transparency and employee rights. In accordance with applicable laws, current and former employees are permitted to review specific documents in their personnel file.

What Employees May Access

Employees may review documents related to:

- Hiring and promotion decisions.
- Disciplinary actions and performance evaluations.
- Transfer or reassignment notices.

What Cannot Be Accessed

Employees may not review:

- Reference checks or letters of recommendation.
- Investigatory records or disciplinary documents under review.

- Medical information or disability-related documentation (covered separately under ADA/HIPAA).
- Confidential information pertaining to another employee.
- Legal records related to judicial proceedings.

How to Request Access

- Employees must submit a written request at least 72 hours in advance (excluding weekends).
- Former employees may request access to their personnel records for up to one (1) year following separation, in accordance with the Illinois Personnel Record Review Act (820 ILCS 40/1 et seq.). Requests must be made in writing and may be subject to identity verification.
- Requests must be made to HR, including the direct Supervisor.
- Former employees or outside representatives must provide proper identification and/or signed consent.

Review Guidelines

- Personnel files must be reviewed in person and in the presence of a designated TEAMSTRING staff member.
- Files may not be altered, edited, or removed from the premises.
- Reasonable requests for photocopies or digital scans may be accommodated. For extensive requests, copying charges may apply.

Employee Clarifications or Disputes

- If an employee disagrees with a document in their file, they may submit a written explanation or rebuttal, which will be attached to the original document.
- Employees may request the removal of a document. Final determination will be made by the Chief Executive Officer upon recommendation and documentation review by Human Resources, and the original document will remain unless explicitly approved for removal.



Acknowledgment of Receipt and Understanding
Personnel Manual

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of TeamString I Am Not Forgotten's **Personnel Manual**. I understand that it is my responsibility to read, become familiar with, and comply with the policies, procedures, and expectations described within the manual.

By signing below, I confirm the following:

- I have received a copy of the Personnel Manual.
- I understand that it is my responsibility to read and understand the information contained in the manual.
- I understand that the policies and procedures described in the manual are subject to change at the discretion of TeamString I Am Not Forgotten, and that I will be notified of any such changes.
- I agree to adhere to the standards of conduct, policies, and procedures outlined in this manual.

If I have any questions regarding the policies or procedures, I understand that I should contact my supervisor or Human Resources for clarification.

Employee Name (Printed): _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____