



EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

2026



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I.

Welcome to the American Foreign Service Association

We are pleased to welcome you to the staff of the American Foreign Service Association (AFSA). Our goal is to provide the highest possible level of service to our members. The work you do here is important. The quality of your performance in service to AFSA members has a direct influence on AFSA's success, as well as your own success during your time here.

This handbook introduces you to AFSA's policies and procedures and answers the most common questions about your employment with AFSA. It is not a contract nor an agreement of employment; rather, it is a summary of our current policies, work rules, and benefits.

As of 2025, all AFSA staff work out of the association's headquarters at 2101 E Street NW. We hope to regain official union status in 2029 and return to our office spaces at the Department of State and Department of Commerce.

What Is AFSA?

The American Foreign Service Association, established in 1924, is both the professional association and exclusive representative (labor union) for the U.S. Foreign Service.

Among its many professional activities, AFSA raises awareness of the Foreign Service to members of Congress, the media, and the American public; publishes *The Foreign Service Journal*; hosts networking, informational, and professional development events for members; distributes a daily media digest and frequent email messages (AFSANets) containing pertinent information for members; presents annual awards for performance, dissent, lifetime achievement, strategic writing, and language achievement; maintains an online presence through social media and the www.afsa.org website; and offers a college scholarship program for the children of AFSA members.

In 2026, AFSA is the exclusive bargaining agent for members of the Foreign Service in the Foreign Agricultural Service and the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS). Until 2025, AFSA had the same role at the Departments of State and Commerce, the former USAID, and the U.S. Agency for Global Media. We hope to regain this status in 2029. In its labor-management capacity, AFSA negotiates with agency management on personnel policies and procedures which affect conditions of employment, rights, and privileges, and assignment and promotion precepts of Foreign Service employees. AFSA also represents members of the Foreign Service in formal grievance, discipline,

investigative, and security clearance proceedings, while providing them with informal assistance in dealing with administrative issues.

Mission: As the voice of the Foreign Service, AFSA is both the principal advocate for the long-term institutional well-being of the professional career Foreign Service and responsible for safeguarding the interests of individual AFSA members. AFSA also seeks to increase understanding among the American people about the vital role of the Foreign Service in sustaining American global leadership.

Whom Do We Serve? AFSA's more than 12,500 members include active-duty and retired Foreign Service officers and specialists from all six currently and previously existing member agencies. AFSA exists to support the Foreign Service, which deploys worldwide to protect America's people, interests, and values. The Foreign Service is the only U.S. government entity that is globally deployed with an enduring physical presence in almost every country in the world, creating an enormous competitive advantage for America and for Americans from all walks of life.

AFSA's members are career professionals who spend roughly two-thirds of their careers abroad representing America to the people and leaders of other countries. Members of the Foreign Service are posted to more than 270 U.S. embassies and consulates around the globe – most in difficult and many in dangerous environments.

Members of the Foreign Service are leaders, problem solvers, and adept communicators. They understand and speak foreign languages; are well versed in other countries' politics, laws, economic drivers, and cultures; and know how to get things done on behalf of the American people and American business.

The Foreign Service Act of 1980, the legal foundation for the Foreign Service, opens by declaring that “a career Foreign Service, characterized by excellence and professionalism, is essential in the national interest.” AFSA speaks for members individually, ensuring that the law is upheld, and due process followed, but also, crucially, for the long-term health and vigor of the Foreign Service as an institution.

Organization and Structure

Governing Board: According to the [AFSA bylaws](#), overall authority and responsibility for the association rest with the Governing Board, whose members are elected for a two-year term. The Board's officers consist of a president, secretary, treasurer, and constituency vice presidents. Each constituency elects its vice president and representative(s), while the full AFSA membership elects the president, secretary, and treasurer. The Governing Board meets monthly at the association's headquarters. Per Article V, Section 5, meeting times and dates are publicized to all AFSA regular members who are welcome to attend.

AFSA's standing committees are appointed by the Governing Board as outlined in the AFSA bylaws. They are the constituency standing committees, the *FSJ* Editorial Board, the Scholarship Committee, the Awards and Plaques Committee, the Governance Committee, the Committee on Elections, and the Legal Defense Fund Committee. The Governing Board may create special committees to undertake specific tasks. These special committees are created in accordance with the AFSA bylaws.

AFSA Staff, Elected Officials, and Volunteers: AFSA as an organization is committed to providing service to our members with the highest level of professional conduct. As such, AFSA is committed to maintaining a professional workplace that is free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation, and bullying. AFSA elected officials, staff, contractors, and volunteers are required to abide by EEO laws, to treat one another with dignity and respect, and are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that brings credit to both AFSA and the Foreign Service.

Any AFSA employee, AFSA contractor, AFSA volunteers, or elected official having a concern regarding the conduct of an AFSA employee, volunteer, contractor, or elected official should raise the concern first with their supervisor and then with the Executive Director, who may consult with the President and any expert legal counsel as necessary.

If the alleged conduct is egregious, or if the staff member, volunteer, contractor, or elected official persists in the conduct despite having been counseled, the Executive Director, in consultation with the President and expert legal counsel as necessary, shall promptly take appropriate action. This may include informing the full Governing Board, in writing, of the concerns with a copy to the individual concerned. That individual shall be afforded seven (7) calendar days to respond in writing.

Pursuant to the AFSA bylaws, Article III, Section 5, the Governing Board has the authority to discipline any member of AFSA, including elected officials, for engaging in conduct which discredits or brings into disrepute the association and/or the Foreign Service by, including but not limited to, issuing a private or public letter of censure. The Executive Director is responsible for the AFSA professional staff and, in partnership with the President, serves as liaison between the staff and the Governing Board.

II.

Employment At Will

Employment with AFSA is “at will,” consistent with the laws of the District of Columbia, which means you may terminate your employment at any time for any reason, or AFSA may terminate the employment relationship at any time without any obligation. Please note that additions, deletions, or revisions to this handbook will be made periodically to reflect new AFSA policies and/or any relevant changes to Federal or local regulations. Any changes to this handbook will be circulated via email by the Executive Director or the Director of HR and Operations.

III.

Employment Opportunity

AFSA believes that employees should have a high-performing, accountable workplace free of both harassment and bullying from colleagues (including and beyond sexual harassment), whether it be based on race, skin color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender or gender expression, age, marital status, personal appearance, sexual orientation, family responsibilities, source of income, place of residence or business, status as a victim of intrafamily offense, credit information, status as a victim or family member of a victim of domestic violence/sexual offense/stalking, or veteran status. Physical harm, verbal abuse, or any type of intimidation or malicious statements that tarnish the desired working atmosphere will be responded to in a serious manner.

The AFSA Workplace: Employees deserve a workplace free of unethical behavior and activities. AFSA believes in the importance of having an ethical workplace, with transparent expectations and clear standards held by both the organization and its employees.

AFSA encourages a congenial and high-performing work environment built on the foundation of respect and professionalism and will strive to create and maintain a workplace free of hostility, with a respectful and cooperative working environment for AFSA employees.

AFSA believes that all employees have a right to be heard. Any leaders – staff or elected – are expected to adhere to an “open door” policy with staff and peers.

Federal anti-discrimination statutes and the District of Columbia Human Rights Act secure the right to equal opportunity in employment. AFSA is committed to upholding this right.

Workplace Harassment: Workplace harassment is any conduct that has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment; has the purpose or effect of substantially and unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance; or otherwise adversely affects an individual’s ability to perform their work. Elected officials, staff, and volunteers are expected to maintain a high level of professional conduct and behavior in all their verbal and written communications. Communication or behavior of any type which threatens or intimidates staff or interferes in any way with staff willingness or ability to do their assigned work in support of AFSA membership will not be tolerated.

Workplace harassment includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, pranks, innuendo, comments, written or graphic material, stereotyping, or other threatening, hostile, or intimidating acts based on race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, gender or gender expression, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, age, disability, veteran status, or other characteristic protected by state or Federal law.

Diversity and Inclusion: AFSA believes strongly in the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the workplace. We strive to recruit a diverse, representative workforce and continually endeavor to promote full and real inclusion. We look at the whole person – not labels. We want our staff to feel appreciated for who they are and what they bring to their work. Nobody should feel like they must subsume their real selves and assimilate to “belong.”

Reporting Procedures: Harassment in the workplace is against the law and will not be tolerated. If you believe you have been subject to or witnessed illegal discrimination, including sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment, you are asked and encouraged to make a complaint.

Supervisors and other responsible AFSA officials who observe, are informed of, or reasonably suspect incidents of possible workplace harassment, must immediately report such incidents to the Executive Director. They will either initiate or oversee a prompt investigation. The Executive Director will consult expert legal counsel as necessary. Supervisors should take effective measures to ensure no further apparent or alleged harassment occurs, pending completion of an investigation.

AFSA will seek to protect the identities of the alleged victim and harasser to the extent possible. AFSA will seek to respect the due process rights of the accused in the investigation phase.

AFSA will also take the necessary steps to protect from retaliation any employee(s) who in good faith report incidents of potential workplace harassment. It is a violation of both Federal law and this policy to retaliate against someone who has reported possible workplace harassment. If the investigation reveals that inappropriate conduct has occurred, the person who has violated this policy will be subject to appropriate sanction or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

AFSA's Responsibilities Under This Policy: As noted above, if AFSA receives and allegation of workplace harassment is occurring in the workplace, it will take the necessary steps to ensure that the matter is promptly investigated and addressed. All complaints will be handled, to the extent possible, in a confidential manner. If the allegation is determined to be credible, AFSA will take immediate and effective measures to end the unwelcome behavior. AFSA is committed to acting if it learns of possible

workplace harassment. AFSA is committed to ensuring that all investigations of workplace harassment are conducted in a prompt, thorough, and impartial manner.

All employees should take special note that both retaliation against an individual who has complained about workplace harassment and retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a workplace harassment complaint are unlawful and will not be tolerated at AFSA.

Employees' Rights and Responsibilities Under This Policy: Any employee who believes they have been the target of any type of harassment is encouraged to inform the offending person orally and/or in writing that such conduct is unwelcome and offensive and must stop. If the employee does not wish to communicate directly with the offending person, or if such communication has been ineffective, the employee has multiple avenues for reporting allegations of harassment and/or pursuing resolution. Employees should report the unwelcome conduct as soon as possible to a responsible AFSA official. It is usually most effective – though not required – that the official be within the employee's supervisory chain. Responsible AFSA officials include first- or second-line supervisors, the offending person's supervisor, the Executive Director, or the AFSA President. As noted previously, AFSA leadership will consult with expert legal counsel, as necessary.

Citizenship: Pursuant to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, all employees must present proof of citizenship or valid U.S. work permit to verify their employment authorization within three days of being offered employment, or that offer shall be considered null and void.

Personnel Categories: The following categories of employment are established solely as an administrative organization in determining eligibility for certain AFSA benefits and coverage under Federal and local employment laws. They do not create, nor are they intended to create, any employment for a fixed or definite term. The categories are the following: Regular Full-Time Employees, Regular Part-Time Employees, Non-Exempt Staff, Exempt Staff, Temporary Employees, and Contractors. The personnel category under which individuals are hired is defined in the formal offer letter from the Executive Director. Questions about category definition or application should be directed to a supervisor or the Director of HR and Operations.

IV.

Recruitment and Hiring

Hiring Procedures: The Executive Director, in close coordination and consultation with the Director of HR and Operations as well as the relevant staff supervisor or relevant elected officer supervisor, is responsible for the hiring of all AFSA staff and contractors. Hiring supervisors are responsible for collaborating with the Director of HR and Operations to recruit, interview, and select staff within their departments. Before an AFSA staff member can begin the hiring process, they must draft or update a position description and meet with the Executive Director to confirm need and budget.

AFSA's general practice will be to advertise vacancies for no less than 15 working days on www.afsa.org as well as on at least two public websites, such as AFSA's LinkedIn or Facebook pages, Indeed.com, the *Washington Post*, etc. Once the advertisement has closed, the Director of HR and Operations and the Executive Director will work with the hiring supervisor to select members of an *ad hoc* hiring committee. The committee must include at least two AFSA professional staff members as well as the Director of HR and Operations. The hiring supervisor must be a member of the *ad hoc* committee. No such committee may comprise members of only one gender. This *ad hoc* committee will review resumes, select finalists to be interviewed, and conduct interviews before making a final choice. Once the process is complete, the hiring supervisor will confirm in writing with the Executive Director and President that a choice has been made. The successful candidate's resume must be included in that notification.

The Director of HR and Operations is responsible for ensuring that the Executive Director has confirmed in writing and salary numbers before they are discussed with potential hires. Successful candidates may be initially information notified through email or telephone call from the supervisor. To officially notify successful applicants that they have been selected, the Director of HR and Operations will prepare, and the Executive Director will sign, a letter of employment. This document will indicate the starting date, position title, position category, supervisor, general responsibilities, beginning salary or rate, probationary period, employment status, and other relevant information.

All successful job applicants are hired on the provision that they pass a criminal background check and employment references. To safeguard the health of colleagues who may be immunocompromised or are caregivers for those who are, COVID vaccinations are required for employment and building access. AFSA will provide reasonable accommodation for medical or religious reasons.

Probationary Period: All AFSA personnel serve a 180-day probationary period upon assuming any position within the association. During this period, it is the supervisor's responsibility to orient the new employee and to communicate the expectations of the supervisor and the association. This information, in addition to specific job duties and responsibilities, should be captured in both the position description as well as the Annual Performance Review (APR) form. At the end of this period, the employee's immediate supervisor will have a formal conversation with the employee about their performance and their continued employment with AFSA. Successful completion of the probationary period does not alter the employment status, which remains "at will."

V.

About Your Job at AFSA

Personnel Records: AFSA maintains confidential personnel files on each member of the staff under appropriate safeguards. These records contain APRs; employment records, including salary, benefits, and tax withholding information; previous performance evaluations; letters of commendation; notification of unsatisfactory performance; performance improvement plans; and position description. This list may not be exhaustive.

Employees are required to assist in the maintenance of personnel records by informing AFSA in writing of changes to their name, address, or phone number; emergency contact; or the number of dependents for withholding tax and health benefits plans, changes in marital status, or any other changes which would affect benefits or records.

Individual personnel files are retained at AFSA for three (3) years following an employee's resignation, separation, or termination. Personnel records are the basis for responses to requests for verification of employment for present or former members of staff. Such requests must be referred to the Executive Director or their designate, who will limit any response to verifying the employee's dates of employment, job title, and eligibility for rehire.

Business Hours: AFSA is "open for business" from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Eastern Time, meaning that member calls and emails are answered during that time. Employees should work out an acceptable 8-hour workday schedule, with an additional 45 minutes for lunch, as agreed with their supervisor. Employees who are not compliant with their agreed-upon schedule could face disciplinary measures.

Flextime and Telework: Regular full-time employees are generally expected to adhere to AFSA's business hours, Mondays through Fridays from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. However, the Executive Director, in consultation with the relevant supervisor, will consider flexible schedules or telework on a case-by-case basis in accordance with the association's policy.

The employee's immediate supervisor and the Executive Director should be satisfied that flextime or teleworking will not impede the work of AFSA and its ability to serve its members in a timely fashion. Flextime and teleworking are privileges and benefits. They may be revoked at any time based on the needs of the organization or if an employee is seen to misuse these privileges.

The schedule for those employees who may be approved for telework will be set and closely adhered to. Employees must be available and responsive during working hours. Employees are expected to attend – either in person or via phone or video conference if approved by their supervisor – staff meetings and other work-related events that fall on their flextime or telework days.

Telework: AFSA is open to a variety of teleworking arrangements. Employees and supervisors must agree on any individual telework agreement. Employees are responsible for the setup and maintenance of their home office. Other than an AFSA-provided computer, employees are responsible for any other equipment, material, and services needed for a home office. (Please see AFSA's Computer, Email, and Internet Usage Policy.) AFSA will not be responsible for providing IT assistance relating to personal equipment and/or networks in a home office.

Any employee may request to telework up to three (3) days a week, provided such an arrangement is approved by their supervisor and the Executive Director and does not negatively impact the work of the association. Any such arrangement can be terminated by the supervisor or the Executive Director if continued telework is determined to be detrimental to the association or the employee's department colleagues. A supervisor may generally require the presence of an employee in the office on a day normally scheduled for telework. All telework agreements must be revisited by the employee and supervisor annually, particularly if there is a material change in work circumstances (i.e. promotion, new supervisor, etc.) to ensure that it meets the business needs of the association.

Employees are generally eligible for telework unless:

1. The employee's recent performance has been poor, or the employee otherwise requires close supervision;
2. The employee has been absent without permission in the last six months; or
3. The employee's absence from the office would place an undue burden on operations.

Remote Work and Alternate Work Location: Employees who have been approved to work permanently from an alternate work location outside the Washington, D.C. area are not considered to be teleworking. AFSA considers "outside the D.C. area" to be any location more than 50 miles from the AFSA building at 2101 E St NW. Employees who are already working under such arrangements will be grandfathered into this system; their agreements shall be reviewed annually to ensure that they meet the needs of the association. AFSA's policy is that all future hires must be resident in Maryland, Virginia, or the District of Columbia.

AFSA will consider future requests to work remotely on a case-by-case basis. All employees are eligible to apply for short-term remote work for compassionate and other relevant reasons, such as assisting an ill family member. Any long-term remote work agreement must be approved by the supervisor, Executive Director, and the AFSA President, and must be reviewed annually. The norm for all AFSA employees is to be based in the Washington, D.C. area.

The Governing Board shall review these policies annually.

Time, Attendance, and Leave Records: All employees must complete their time sheets by Wednesday morning prior to pay day, every other week. Time and attendance records must be approved by the employee's supervisor, who will electronically approve and submit them to the relevant department. Requests to earn compensatory time off must be approved in advance by the supervisor (see below on compensatory time).

Pay Schedule: Payroll is executed biweekly. Pay is subject to withholding of federal and appropriate state taxes and Federal Insurance Contributions Act payments. Employees may only elect to receive paychecks through direct deposit to their designated banking institution. The payroll calendar is available upon request from the Director of HR and Operations.

Salary Advances: Regular staff members may request up to one salary advance per year, if (I) the advance is repaid within six (6) weeks; (II) the payback begins in the next immediate pay period; and (III) the employee has no outstanding salary advance. The amount of the salary advance may not exceed two weeks' pay. Should the employee fail to repay the advance within six (6) weeks, AFSA will withhold the amount outstanding from the employee's subsequent paycheck(s). AFSA will not advance salary or leave to those employees who already have a negative leave balance.

Compensatory Time: Compensatory time may be granted for specific weekend, holiday, or early morning or late evening assignments resulting from unusual situations requiring extra work, if advance approval from the employee's supervisor is obtained.

Compensatory time earned and used during a pay period will be documented on the employee's time and attendance record in the "notes" section but will not be tracked by the finance and accounting department. The employee and supervisor must do so. An employee may earn up to 16 in any given pay period, and the employee must use the time earned by the end of the next period, unless an exception is approved in writing by the supervisor. Compensatory time which is earned but not taken prior to the resignation, separation, or termination of the employee is not eligible for reimbursement.

Email and Internet Use: Email accounts and access to the Internet are provided to employees for the conduct of AFSA business. Personal use of these services should be

kept to a minimum. Employees should always adhere to high standards of conduct when it comes to websites being visited. Viewing graphic, sexually explicit, or otherwise offensive websites or sending or receiving sexually explicit or offensive material is expressly prohibited and will be ground for disciplinary action, up to and including immediate dismissal. AFSA provides a safe and inclusive workplace where behavior which could be construed as harassment or bullying by another employee, volunteer, elected official, or contractor will not be tolerated.

Email and Internet Security: Downloads of external content of any type, including automatically prompted updates for existing software, should be handled only by the on-site IT administrator or staff members with administrative access to AFSA's system.

AFSA maintains cybersecurity insurance as part of its efforts to safeguard data and information. Employees are required to complete regular cybersecurity training and maintain a minimum score, determined and announced by the association.

Professional Conduct: AFSA expects that staff members will conduct themselves in ways that reflect positively on the association. Employees are expected to refrain from activities that may create a conflict of interest or call into question their professionalism. When in doubt as to whether activities on or away from the job may compromise AFSA's interests or mission, clarification should be sought from their supervisor, Executive Director, General Counsel, or AFSA President.

Confidentiality: Please consult the association's policy on confidential information, which is available upon request from the Director of HR and Operations and on the AFSA SharePoint site.

Communications: During your time with AFSA, you may be provided with communications tools and resources for use in conducting day-to-day business activities, including computers, telephones, voice mail, fax, scanners, email, text messaging, and/or other AFSA-provided or underwritten technology. Use of these tools is primarily for business, but reasonable personal use is permitted within the limits described above regarding confidentiality. While limited personal use of AFSA technology is allowed, illegal or immoral activities are prohibited.

Personal use of AFSA technology must not detract from work. All communication using these tools should be handled in a professional and respectful manner. *You have no expectation of privacy in your use of any AFSA computer, phone, or other communication tool.* All communications made using AFSA-provided equipment or services, including email and internet activity, are subject to inspection by AFSA. Keep in mind that even if you delete an email, voicemail, or other communication, a copy may be archived on AFSA systems.

You should be aware that information transmitted through email is not completely secure, and information you transmit or receive could, if mishandled or received by someone with malicious intent, damage the reputation of AFSA or, in some cases, the foreign affairs agencies.

Social Media: Information posted on a website or communication via social media platforms such as X, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and others is available to the public. AFSA cautions employees to demonstrate respect for the professional integrity of AFSA, its staff, and its members.

AFSA expects staff to comply with all applicable laws, including, but not limited to, Federal Trade Commission (FTC) guidelines, copyright, trademark, and harassment laws. These are available on www.ftc.gov.

Political Neutrality: AFSA is a strictly non-partisan organization and represents all members of the Foreign Service without regard to political affiliation. AFSA recognizes the importance of individual participation by citizens in the political process and will not discriminate against any employee because of identification with or support of any lawful political activity engaged in outside of work. However, if any AFSA staff engage in political activity, they should ideally endeavor to make it clear that their actions and opinions are their own and not those of AFSA.

Conflicts of Interest: Please consult the association's policy on conflicts of interest, available upon request from the Director of HR and Operations and on the AFSA SharePoint site.

Whistleblower Protections: Numerous laws provide protection against retaliation for whistleblowing, including the reporting to appropriate officials a violation of any law, rule, or regulation, or mismanagement, a gross waste of funds, an abuse of authority, a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety, or any other activity providing whistleblower protection. AFSA is committed to providing a work environment in which employees may engage in protected activity without fear of retaliation. AFSA strictly prohibits any employee from retaliating against any other employee because the employee has engaged in protected activity, or because the employee has made a charge, testified, assisted, or participated in any manner of investigation, proceeding, or hearing regarding alleged wrongdoing. Anyone engaging in retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

Documents and Records Retention: Please consult the association's policy on records retention, available upon request from the Director of HR and Operations or on the AFSA SharePoint site.

Dress Code: All AFSA employees are expected to wear attire befitting a professional work environment. Mondays through Thursdays, the dress code is business casual, with professional attire expected whenever an employee meets with the general public, members, or has other professional interactions. Fridays are casual unless there are scheduled meetings or events in which the employee will be involved. Under certain circumstances, medical issues may require an employee to wear casual clothing on days other than Fridays. Wearable items of any type displaying offensive language or imagery are never permitted under any circumstances at AFSA or in the course of events outside of the AFSA offices attended by AFSA staff.

Smoking Policy: There is no smoking in any AFSA facility or office. This includes a prohibition on vaping as well.

Drug-Free Workplace and Policy: AFSA explicitly prohibits:

- The use, possession, solicitation, or sale of narcotics or other drugs or prescription medication without a prescription on AFSA premises or while performing an assignment.
- Being impaired or under the influence of legal or illegal drugs at or away from AFSA premises, if such an impairment or influence adversely affect the employee's work performance, the safety of the employee or of others, or puts at risk AFSA's reputation.
- Possession, use, solicitation, or sale of legal or illegal drugs at or away from AFSA premises, if such activity or involvement adversely affect the employee's work performance, the safety of the employee or of others, or puts at risk the association's reputation.
- The presence of any detectable amount of prohibited substances in the employee's system while at work, while on the premises of the company or its customers/vendors, or while on company business. „Prohibited substances“ include illegal drugs and prescription drugs not taken in accordance with a prescription given to the employee.

Any employee violating this policy will be subject to disciplinary measures, up to and including termination.

Security: AFSA takes seriously its role as an employer in providing a safe and secure working environment for all AFSA staff, contractors, volunteers, and elected officials. AFSA follows all applicable Federal and D.C. laws and regulations. If at any time AFSA staff, volunteers, contractors, or elected officials notice behavior, situations, or issues within AFSA's physical spaces, they should bring these issues immediately to the attention of the Executive Director.

AFSA employees may not assemble on the roof of the headquarters building except in case of emergencies or when approved by the Executive Director. Violation of this policy potentially brings AFSA into noncompliance with the association's insurance policies and D.C. safety codes.

Procurement, Purchases, and Reimbursement: All purchases, including supplies, furnishings, equipment, services, subscriptions, etc., must be authorized by the Executive Director. They can delegate authority to supervisors, managers, and directors for purchases of \$500 or less. Receipts and/or invoices are required for all expenditures. A violation of this requirement will result in a recorded, verbal warning. Repeated violations will result in a letter of reprimand and a possible performance improvement plan.

Purchase Orders: Purchase orders are prepared by the staff and approved by the respective manager/director, Controller, Executive Director or President before being sent to ap@afsa.org. All purchase orders are reviewed by the Executive Director. Receipts and/or invoices are required for all expenditures.

Petty Cash: Reimbursement for incidental expenses under \$20 incurred in conducting day-to-day AFSA business is obtained by completing a petty cash voucher. Receipts for expenses are required. The Controller and any other designated staff member are responsible for AFSA's petty cash funds.

Representation Expenses: All representational expenses in excess of \$50 must be approved in advance in writing by the Executive Director, who will certify that such expenditure advances AFSA's mission.

Employees may be reimbursed out of petty cash funds for transportation expenses not exceeding \$20 incurred during AFSA business. Receipts are required. Employees using their own car on AFSA business will receive mileage reimbursement at the official IRS rate. Requests for mileage reimbursement should justify the purpose of the trip and include departure and destination points.

VI.

Employee Benefits

AFSA offers a comprehensive package of employee benefits, most of which are provided at no cost to the employee. A few may require that the employee make a contribution, as described here and in any relevant benefits selection packages which will be made available to employees both at the beginning of employment and during any “open season” which occurs during the time of employment. For more information regarding benefit programs, please refer to the documentation with which you were provided during your onboarding to AFSA. Any questions on these benefits should be directed to the Director of HR and Operations.

Unemployment Compensation: AFSA contributes to the unemployment trust fund of the District of Columbia. The D.C. Unemployment Commission determines eligibility and benefit payments.

Workers’ Compensation: AFSA employees are covered by workers' compensation insurance. Any employee who is injured in the performance of work for AFSA must immediately report the accident to their supervisor and the Executive Director. Workers’ compensation claims forms, available from the Director of HR and Operations, must be filed with AFSA’s insurance carrier within 30 days.

VII.

Employee Leave

General Leave Provisions: In order that the association's business may be carried out smoothly, all anticipated absences should be brought to the attention of the employee's immediate supervisor as soon as possible. Requests for leave should be made using the online payroll service application and confirmed by the supervisor as soon as possible. Approval of vacation schedules is dependent on the press of business. For that reason, supervisors should coordinate leave schedules within their sections to ensure offices are covered to the extent possible. Should a conflict in scheduling develop, the granting of leave will depend largely on the relative lengths of AFSA service of the employees in question, or an emergency.

Holidays: In general, AFSA observes the same holidays as the federal workforce. The following holidays are paid: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King's Birthday, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. In addition, AFSA grants all employees the day after Thanksgiving as a paid holiday.

Consistent with federal regulations, when a holiday falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday is observed. When it falls on a Sunday, the following Monday is observed. As a matter of policy, AFSA generally follows the Federal government regarding closing on days other than holidays. If the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) announces a closing by the government, AFSA will follow suit.

Inclement Weather: In the case of adverse weather conditions or civil emergency situations, AFSA follows the lead of the Federal government, specifically OPM, on closing the building. However, AFSA may grant additional paid leave beyond what the Federal government grants. Such decisions will be made by the Executive Director and the President, who will notify employees of such decisions as quickly as possible.

Additionally, AFSA has policies on air quality and extreme heat. If local air quality moves into the Red, Purple or Maroon parts of the measurement scale, we encourage staff members with any type of respiratory issue to work from home. Similarly, if the local heat index is forecast to reach 105°F or above, we encourage all staff to work from home that day.

Religious Holidays: Employees requesting leave for a religious holiday not covered by the federal holiday leave schedule must have written advance approval from their supervisor. The request should identify the religious holiday and the amount of time needed. Annual or personal leave, or comp time, may be used to cover time off in such cases.

As an organization, AFSA will be respectful and supportive of an employee's need to take time off for religious reasons.

Personal Day: All regular full-time employees receive one personal day off within any 12-month period of employment to be used at their discretion. This day is accrued at the successful completion of the 180-day probationary period. A personal day may not be carried over beyond the anniversary date, nor be reimbursed upon termination of employment.

Part-time employees may take a partial personal day, equivalent to the hours worked on a regular workday. For instance, an employee who encumbers a 75% position would be entitled to a 6-hour personal day.

Annual Leave: An employee may use annual leave for any approved absence. However, an employee may not be required to use annual leave when other options are available, as outlined below.

Annual leave accrues at the rate of 13 working days per year for the first three years of employment, 21 days from the fourth to the seventh year, and 26 working days a year thereafter. The leave year begins on the first day of the first pay period of the calendar year and consists of 26 two-week periods. Leave accrues from the employee's first day of duty but is not available until four weeks of employment have been completed.

In chart form, here are the leave accruals:

Employee Vacation Accrual Rates per Pay Period in Hours

	FTE/PP	60+ Hrs/PP	48+ Hrs/PP	40+ Hrs/PP
Years 1 - 3	4	3	2.4	2
Years 4 - 6	6.46	4.845	3.876	3.23
Years 7+	8	6	4.8	4

** A pay period is two weeks

** Year 1 starts on your hire date

Employees who leave or are terminated before having worked two two-week pay periods forfeit any leave which has accumulated. Absence of a period in excess of the amount of annual leave earned under the provisions of this section will be on a leave-without-pay basis.

Advance of Annual Leave: Any full-time employee may request up to 40 hours (5 days) of advance annual leave (vacation) once a year in case of need. Employees working fewer

than 40 hours may request up to their normal weekly work hours. Such requests must be approved in writing by the employee's supervisor and the Executive Director. Should an employee need to exceed that allotment, any additional hours beyond the limit must be taken as Leave Without Pay and require approval by the employee's supervisor and the Executive Director. Annual leave will be advanced only after all current annual leave is exhausted. Advance leave must be repaid within six (6) months.

Annual Leave Carry-Over: Employees are encouraged to take annual leave and should schedule vacations/time off in accordance with their workload to ensure that they do not exceed the limitations of leave carry-over at the end of the leave year. Full-time and part-time employees hired before January 1, 2018, may carry over a maximum of 250 hours from one year to the next. Employees hired on or after January 1, 2018, may carry over a maximum of 120 hours. Employees will be paid for unused annual leave (minus any advance sick leave or other financial obligations to the association) at the termination of employment. The carry-over ceiling will be calibrated and take effect on the 1st of the year.

Sick Leave: Full-time, regular employees accrue sick leave at the rate of four hours every pay period (13 days per year) and is cumulative without limit. Unused sick leave is not paid at the termination of employment. The employee may use sick leave:

- To receive medical or mental health, dental, or optical examination or treatments for themselves, their spouse, or their children;
- For absence due to physical or mental illness, injury, pregnancy, or childbirth;
- Care of a family member who has a serious health condition¹; or
- If determined by health authorities, the employee jeopardizes the health of others by their presence on the job due to exposure to a communicable disease.

Sick leave accruals in chart form are:

Employee Sick Accrual Rates per Pay Period in Hours			
FTE/PP	60+ Hrs/PP	48+ Hrs/PP	40+ Hrs/PP
4	3	2.4	2

** A pay period is two weeks

¹ Family members include any person to whom the employee is related by blood, legal custody, or marriage, and any person with whom the employee has shared a residence in the past year and maintained a committed relationship. A family member also includes a child who lives with an employee and for whom the employee permanently assumes and discharges parental responsibility. A serious health condition means a physical or mental illness, injury, or impairment that requires inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential health care facility, or continuing treatment at home by a health care provider or other competent individual.

Advance of Sick Leave: In cases of serious medical disability or illness of the employee or their family member, or when required by the situation, paid sick leave up to 13 days may be advanced in any one year. Requests for advance sick leave must be approved by the Executive Director, who may ask that the request be supported by satisfactory evidence. Sick leave will be advanced only after all current accrued sick leave is exhausted.

AFSA Service Leave: AFSA encourages and supports employee involvement in community service. The association believes this makes for better employees and more conscientious colleagues. Community service may involve refurbishing a home for the needy, taking care of the elderly, aiding mentally or physically challenged individuals, rendering overseas humanitarian support, addressing illiteracy, etc.

AFSA grants employees 24 hours of service leave each year to participate in worthy service projects during working hours, so that they will not have to take personal or annual leave. All proposals for service leave should be submitted in writing and approved by the supervisor and Executive Director. Any service leave approved for part-time employees will be prorated based on the employees' hours worked. As with sick leave, employees do not receive any compensation for unused service leave upon completing employment with AFSA. Service leave does not carry over from year to year and is not cumulative.

Compassionate Leave: Regular employees will be granted up to 32 hours leave with pay per year to make arrangements for, and to attend, the funeral of a member or members of their family or close personal friend. Employees may use sick leave, annual leave, family medical leave, or leave without pay to cover absences exceeding 32 hours.

When using compassionate leave, the employee should notify their immediate supervisor and the Executive Director as soon as possible in writing and submit a leave request.

Parental Leave: Regular employees may be granted up to 60 workdays (or 480 hours) of leave with pay to take care of a newborn infant or adopted child. Parental leave must be taken within 12 months of the birth or adoption of a child and must be scheduled with the approval of the supervisor, as well as the written approval of the Executive Director and the President. Accrued annual and sick leave may also be taken in addition to parental leave.

In-Office Breast Milk Expression: Reasonable break time is provided for an employee to nurse or express breast milk for their nursing child as needed. A private location (lactation room) is provided for this purpose at AFSA headquarters, as is a dedicated refrigerator.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA): Any employee who has been employed by AFSA for one year without a break in service except for regular annual, sick, or personal leave, and has worked at least 1000 hours during the 12-month period preceding the request for

family and medical leave, is entitled to 16 weeks of leave without pay (during any 24-month period) for family leave and 16 weeks of leave without pay (during any 24-month period) for medical leave.

Family leave is available for:

- The birth or adoption of a child;
- Placement of a child for adoption or foster care;
- Incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or childbirth; or
- Care of a family member who has a serious health condition.

Medical leave is available for:

- Personal medical care, where the employee has become unable to perform the functions of the position because of a serious medical condition.

In those instances when advance notice may be possible (e.g. planned surgery, maternity leave), the employee shall provide reasonable prior notice, including the last anticipated day of work.

The employee may elect to use any type of paid leave available (e.g. vacation, personal, sick, AFSA-provided family or medical leave, and/or leave donations). This paid leave will count against the 16 allowable weeks for family leave and 16 allowable weeks for medical leave. On July 1, 2020, D.C. began administering paid leave benefits for D.C. workers.

Employees can also file for paid FMLA separately with the D.C. Department of Employment Services (DOES) Office of Paid Family Leave (OPFL)

<<https://does.dc.gov/page/dc-paid-family-leave>>.

Any employee who takes family or medical leave under these guidelines will not lose any employment benefit or seniority accrued before the date on which leave commenced. Employees will also continue to be covered by health benefits while on leave, provided they continue to pay their portion of the premium. However, employees utilizing AFSA-provided paid family or medical leave and those on unpaid family and medical leave do not accrue sick or annual leave during these periods of leave.

Upon the employee's return to work from family or medical leave within the allowed D.C. FLMA leave period, AFSA shall restore the employee to the position they held when the leave commenced, or an equivalent position. AFSA reserves the right to deny restoration of employment to anyone who is among the five highest-paid employees and where denial of restoration of employment is necessary to prevent substantial economic injury to AFSA's operations consistent with the D.C. FMLA. Any employee subject to such denial shall be informed before departure on leave of the potential for their inclusion in this category. If a decision is made during the employee's absence that their role must be filled

to avoid risk to the organization and/or its members, the employee will be informed in writing immediately that such a decision has been made. They must also receive the basis for the decision.

An employee who does not return to work within the required D.C. FMLA period may be terminated from employment.

AFSA's Leave Drive Program: AFSA's program allows employees to voluntarily donate sick leave to other employees who need leave because of a verified medical condition, for which documentation may be required.

In cases of medical need where an employee has exhausted their person, sick, and annual leave, after receiving approval from the employee (or if they are unable to give approval, their spouse/partner/family member/representative), AFSA will circulate a message asking employees for leave donations. The recipient may only use the donated leave for the documented medical condition. The total donated leave should not surpass 160 per annum. An employee may receive donated sick leave when they become an approved leave recipient.

For part-time employees who receive benefits, the period of absence without leave is prorated.

This program will be administered by AFSA's finance and accounting staff, and the Executive Director will be kept informed. The request goes to the Director of HR and Operations and the Executive Director.

Those wishing to donate leave must have a minimum of 80 hours of sick leave and may not fall below 60 hours. Any individual may donate up to 40 hours of their accrued sick leave to a fellow employee per year. Any unused, donated leave should be held and administered at HR's discretion to assist employees as needed.

Military Family Leave Entitlements: Eligible employees with a spouse, child, or parent who is on active military duty, or called to active-duty status, in the National Guard or military reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Those may include attending certain military events, arranging alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

The Family and Medical Leave Act also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the armed forces, including a member of the National Guard or reserves, who has a serious

injury or illness incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render them medically unfit to perform their duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy.

Military Leave: Leave without pay of up to 15 days will be granted annually to employees serving in the military reserves as defined in 10 U.S.C. 261. During military leave, AFSA will continue to pay all insurance premiums, and annual leave and sick leave will continue to accrue. Upon the completion of military leave, the employee will be reinstated to their position, with all re-employment rights protected. This leave is not cumulative.

Administrative Leave: Leave with pay may be granted to regular full-or part-time employees for certain specific reasons, including but not limited to jury duty. Administrative leave requires prior approval in writing from both the employee's supervisor and the Executive Director. During such leave, pay benefits and seniority will be maintained, and sick and annual leave will continue to accrue.

VIII.

Performance Assessments and Salary

Performance Assessments: All AFSA staff members will generally participate in an annual performance assessment process, captured in the Annual Performance Review (APR). The cycle is aligned with the calendar year, restarting each January with the creation of an APR form and ending with a final review. An APR template will be given to all staff by their supervisor upon hiring. Employees and supervisors should amend the APR throughout the year as needed, making sure to send any revisions to the Director of HR and Operations for retention.

Staff reporting directly to the President or constituency Vice Presidents will have the option of having their APR reviewed by either the Executive Director or the Executive Committee. The APR process does not affect the awarding of bonuses or end-of-year salary adjustments but is rather a tool for performance management and professional development.

The Executive Director will inform all staff of any changes made to the APR template.

Bonuses: The AFSA Governing Board approves a bonus pool for each fiscal year. Any staff member may nominate a colleague for a bonus throughout the year based on specific achievements or performance (so-called spot bonuses). AFSA encourages such bonuses in lieu of an end-of-year bonus, as such a system may create expectations that all employees will receive a bonus around the holidays.

Salaries: The policy of the association is to maintain salaries comparable (based on experience) to those prevailing in similar organizations in the Washington, D.C., metropolitan area, subject to AFSA's means and the availability of funds. To this end, a comparison (based on position descriptions) to D.C. area market rates will be performed regularly as needed.

Salary Reclassification: Salaries may be raised or lowered based on significant changes in the position's responsibilities or title change. The Executive Director and the President shall review all position reclassification requests and their financial impact, both as the requests come forward and during the annual budget review.

IX.

Termination of Employment

Employees retiring or resigning from AFSA, or those terminated, are entitled to payment for salary owed plus unused annual leave, less any advance sick or annual leave or other financial obligation to the association. The employee is not compensated for unused sick leave or compensatory time, as noted above. Separated employees of any kind may be eligible to continue insurance coverage under COBRA, should they be deemed eligible by AFSA, and will be notified by U.S. mail with details.

Resignation: Any employee who plans to resign or retire is requested to provide their supervisor with at least two weeks' notice. Unless otherwise agreed, the period of notice is to be spent working normal business hours. Should the employee be rehired within five (5) years, unused sick leave will be reinstated, provided the employee is able to present documentation of the leave. Employees rehired within one year of leaving AFSA will retain seniority and will accrue leave at the same rate as they did prior to leaving AFSA. If an employee is rehired by AFSA after one year has passed, they will no longer retain seniority.

Termination for Cause: An employee may be terminated for cause, with or without advance notice, depending upon the severity of the misconduct. Termination for cause may be based on egregious misconduct, including but not limited to theft, fraud, misuse of AFSA property, falsification of employment records, making false statements to supervisors, and producing and/or viewing pornography or similar graphic imagery. If the employee's misconduct is egregious, they may be terminated without advance notice. If an employee is suspected of engaging in criminal behavior, AFSA may turn the matter over to law enforcement. If the employee does not believe they have been treated fairly, they should address those concerns in writing to the Executive Director within seven (7) calendar days of termination. AFSA will respond promptly in writing.

Employees may also be terminated for repetition and/or a pattern of lesser offenses, such as insubordination; comments that are inflammatory against colleagues, AFSA members, or AFSA Governing Board members; or sexual, racial or other discrimination or harassment. Prior to termination, the employee's supervisor should make the employee aware of deficiencies and expectations, first orally. If the behavior is not corrected promptly, a written notification of unsatisfactory conduct detailing both the deficiencies and expectations should be given to the employee by the supervisor. If, following a 10-day period, the employee's conduct is still not satisfactory, they may be immediately discharged. In those cases where AFSA does not believe termination is warranted, AFSA may issue a written reprimand or suspend the employee without pay. If the employee believes that they have not been treated fairly, they should address those concerns in

writing to the Executive Director within seven (7) calendar days of termination. AFSA will respond promptly in writing.

Reduction in Force or Reorganization: Employees may also be terminated due to a reduction in force or reorganization. A reorganization of staff to improve efficiency and reduce costs for members may result in an employee being terminated or the employee's working hours being reduced, for example. The employee will be given no less than two weeks' notice in such cases. If an employee is terminated due to a reduction in force or reorganization, they will be entitled to payment for salary owed plus unused annual leave, less any advance sick or annual leave or other financial obligations to the association. The employee may also be entitled to severance, as described immediately below. The Executive Director will keep the President and Governing Board informed of reorganization activities.

Severance Pay: Where termination is due to a reduction in force or reorganization, employees who have completed the 180-day probationary period will be entitled to severance pay. Where termination is due to unsatisfactory performance, AFSA may provide severance pay to employees who have completed the 180-day probationary period. Severance pay is not granted upon resignation or termination for cause from AFSA. Whenever granted, severance pay will be provided in addition to any payment for unused annual leave, minus any advance sick or annual leave or other financial obligation to the association.

For employees hired before January 1, 2019, severance pay will generally be one week for each year of service. For those employees hired on or after January 1, 2019, severance pay will range from a minimum of two (2) weeks to a maximum of twelve (12) weeks, with severance pay accumulating at a rate of one week for each year of service. Any additional severance matters will be decided on a case-by-case basis, as determined by the Executive Director, in consultation with the President and expert legal counsel as necessary.

X.

Exit Procedures

Your commitment to protecting the sensitive information you may have had access to during your employment with AFSA continues once your relationship with AFSA ends. Improper use or disclosure of membership information or confidential business information during your employment or after your departure may subject you to disciplinary action and/or legal action, as appropriate, even if you do not actually benefit from the disclosed information.

All AFSA or foreign affairs agency property, including badges, building passes, fobs, keys, computers, docking stations, phones, and equipment must be returned prior to the release of the employee's final paycheck.

Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that employees under their supervision comply with these procedures. In case of resignation or reduction in force, the Executive Director will offer to conduct a brief non-compulsory exit interview before the employee's final day, which may include signing any relevant documentation. Staff will be notified by U.S. mail of their options to continue COBRA coverage of their insurance, if deemed eligible by AFSA.

XI.

Employee Handbook Acknowledgement and Receipt

I hereby acknowledge receipt of the AFSA employee handbook (version effective January 1, 2026). I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies in the handbook.

I understand that the handbook and all other written and oral materials provided to me are intended for informational purposes only and do not create an employment contract with AFSA. I understand that the policies and benefits, both in the handbook and communicated to me in any other fashion, are subject to interpretation, review, and change by management at any time without notice.

I further agree that neither this document nor any other communication shall bind AFSA to employ me now or in the future and that my employment may be terminated by me or AFSA without reason at any time. I understand that only the Executive Director or the President are authorized to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time or to assure any other personnel action or to assure any benefits or terms or conditions of employment or make any agreement contrary to the foregoing.

Employee's Name [printed]

Employee's Signature

Date Signed

TO BE PLACED IN THE EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE