



NCIRE

Northern California Institute for Research and Education, Inc.

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Updated August 2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
<i>Acknowledgment of Receipt – Employee Handbook.....</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Welcome.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>About NCIRE</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>The NCIRE Human Resources Department</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>About This Employee Handbook.....</i>	<i>4</i>
NATURE OF THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP	5
<i>NCIRE Background Check Policy</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Without Compensation Appointment/Federal Background Check Requirements</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Licensure, Certification or Registration</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Employment At-Will</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Open Door Policy.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Internal Complaint Procedure</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>NCIRE Confidential Hotline – 1-844-904-1770</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Equal Employment Opportunity.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Reasonable Accommodation For Persons With Disabilities</i>	<i>9</i>
WORK RULES AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT	10
<i>Policy Against Discrimination and Other Workplace Harassment</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Policy Against Sexual Harassment.....</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Policy Against Retaliation.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Policy Against Workplace Violence</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Policy Against Workplace Gambling</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<i>Attendance and Punctuality.....</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Conflicts of Interest</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Consensual Relationships and Non-Fraternization.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Dual Employment with UCSF or VA</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Professional Dress Standards</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Standards of Conduct</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>Driving for Work Policy.....</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Whistleblower Policy</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Pets in the Workplace Policy</i>	<i>24</i>

SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKING CONDITIONS	24
<i>Safety.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>Smoking.....</i>	<i>25</i>
PROPERTY BELONGING TO NCIRE	25
<i>Confidential and Proprietary Information</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Work Areas, Equipment and Property.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Electronic Mail (E-Mail) and Voicemail</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>Duplication of Software.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Company Communication</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Social Media Policy.....</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy.....</i>	<i>29</i>
EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND RECORDS.....	34
<i>Employment Records.....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Performance Evaluations</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Compensation and Adjustments</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Resignation.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Employment References.....</i>	<i>36</i>
PAYROLL AND TIMEKEEPING	36
<i>Paydays</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Direct Deposit.....</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Wage Garnishments.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Office Hours.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Work Day and Work Week Defined.....</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Alternative Work Schedules</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Emergency Dismissal</i>	<i>37</i>
<i>Effort Reporting and Electronic Timesheets</i>	<i>37</i>
WAGE AND HOUR POLICIES	38
<i>Employment Classifications.....</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Meal Periods.....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Rest Periods</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>Overtime.....</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Making up Time Taken off for Personal Reasons</i>	<i>41</i>
TIME OFF AND LEAVES OF ABSENCES.....	41
<i>Holidays.....</i>	<i>41</i>

<i>Vacation</i>	<i>42</i>
<i>Sick Leave</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Bereavement and Emergency Leave</i>	<i>45</i>
<i>Family Care/Medical Leave</i>	<i>46</i>
<i>Pregnancy and Childbirth Related Disability Leaves and Accommodations.....</i>	<i>49</i>
<i>Other Disability Leaves</i>	<i>51</i>
<i>Other Legally Required Leaves of Absences</i>	<i>51</i>
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS.....	57
<i>Overview.....</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>Paid Family Leave (PFL) and Family Temporary Disability Insurance (FTDI)</i>	<i>57</i>
<i>Paid Parental Leave.....</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>Short Term Disability Benefits</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Long-Term Disability Benefits.....</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Group Term Life Policy.....</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Employee Assistance Program</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconsideration Act (COBRA).....</i>	<i>59</i>
<i>Workers Compensation</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>Retirement Plans</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>Transit and Parking Benefit Plan</i>	<i>61</i>
<i>Ergonomics Evaluations</i>	<i>61</i>
<i>Employee Referral Program</i>	<i>61</i>
Required Notice.....	63

INTRODUCTION

Acknowledgment of Receipt – Employee Handbook

**Please Sign and Return This Acknowledgment to the Director of Human Resources
Within One Week of Receipt of this Employee Handbook**

I, _____, acknowledge that on _____, I received a copy of the Northern California Institute for Research and Education, Inc., (NCIRE) Employee Handbook ("Employee Handbook"). I understand that the Employee Handbook contains important information about the company's personnel policies and my privileges, benefits and obligations as an employee. I understand and agree that as a condition of my employment, I am required to read, understand, and comply with the policies and procedures as set forth in the Employee Handbook. If I have questions about any policy contained in this Employee Handbook, I understand that I should speak to my supervisor or contact the Human Resources Department.

I understand that NCIRE reserves the right to interpret and administer the provisions of this Employee Handbook as needed. I agree that NCIRE may change, rescind, or modify this Employee Handbook, at its sole discretion, at any time, with or without prior notice. Any delay or failure by NCIRE to enforce any rule, regulation, or procedure contained in this Employee Handbook will not constitute a waiver of NCIRE's right to do so in the future.

I further understand that the policies and practices contained in the Employee Handbook are guidelines only and are not intended to create any contractual rights or obligations, express or implied.

I further understand that my employment relationship with NCIRE is at-will, which means that my employment is for no definite period and my employer or I may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice, with or without cause, for any reason. NCIRE reserves discretion to demote or discipline me or otherwise alter the terms of my employment at any time at its sole discretion, with or without cause or advance notice.

I understand and agree that during the period of my employment, except for the Executive Director, no representative of NCIRE has the authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified period of time, or to make any agreement contrary to my at-will employment status. Any such employment agreement must be in writing and signed by both the Executive Director and me.

I further understand and agree that this Employee Handbook contains a full and complete statement of the agreements and understandings that they recite, and that this Employee Handbook supersedes and replaces any earlier handbooks, manuals, policies, practices, guidelines, written or oral descriptions of the terms or conditions of my employment, and any previous agreements, whether written or oral, express or implied, relating to the subjects covered in this Employee Handbook.

I understand that nothing in this handbook prohibits or restricts employees from exercising rights or engaging in activities protected by the National Labor Relations Act.

Employee Printed Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Date: _____

Welcome

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the Northern California Institute for Research and Education, Inc. (NCIRE). As a new member of our team, you are joining a leading medical research institute dedicated to advancing science through federally funded studies and industry-sponsored clinical trials. NCIRE is the largest research organization nationwide dedicated to Veterans research.

NCIRE is proud to operate on the scenic campus of the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Health Care System (SFVAHCS), as well as at our vibrant Mission Bay location. We value our affiliation with the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), a world-renowned institution in biomedical research and education.

While we celebrate over 30 years of groundbreaking innovation, we stand at the forefront of a new era in biomedical discovery. Our mission remains steadfast: to improve the health and well-being of Veterans and the public by supporting a world-class research program.

Today, NCIRE is home to nearly 200 scientists and their teams whose work directly contributes to better health outcomes for Veterans—and ultimately, for our entire nation. We take pride in fostering a collaborative and inclusive environment that encourages scientific exploration and accelerates the translation of research into clinical care.

Our employees are the heart of NCIRE. We recognize the unique talents and dedication everyone brings, and we are deeply committed to supporting your well-being and professional growth.

We hope your new role brings you both personal fulfillment and professional achievement. Welcome aboard—we're excited to have you as part of our dynamic and mission-driven organization!

Sincerely,

Rebecca Rosales

Chief Executive Officer

About NCIRE

Welcome to the largest non-profit research institute affiliated with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) in the United States. Northern California Institute for Research and Education, Inc. (NCIRE) is a team of physician scientists and scientists working with the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) and the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Health Care System (SFVAHCS) to align research interests with Veterans' needs.

NCIRE research is organized around focus areas consisting of scientists, postdoctoral researchers, and research associates. Interactions and collaboration among the research groups are encouraged, creating a stimulating environment.

Medical research is conducted in such diverse areas as aging, cardiovascular disease, neurodegenerative diseases, cancer, hepatitis, other infectious diseases, health services research, and mental health. Some of these scientists are engaged in research that will help us understand the function of certain human cells, genes, proteins, and other fundamental structures within our bodies.

Since NCIRE's founding in 1988, the institute has made a home for some of the most outstanding biomedical researchers in the country. Every day, our scientists collaborate on the threshold of discovery to explore new ideas and find the answers that will improve the health of our Veterans.

The NCIRE Human Resources Department

It is the mission of NCIRE's Human Resources Department ("HR") to continue to attract, develop, motivate, and retain a successful workforce to support NCIRE's mission of providing the finest research environment for our researchers in their quest to cure human diseases and afflictions.

The Human Resources team warmly welcomes you to the NCIRE research community and encourages all employees to contribute meaningfully to our shared mission.

This Employee Handbook, as well as many other HR documents, can be found at: <https://www.ncire.org/resources> under the Human Resources tab.

You can also reach the HR Team at (415) 750-6954.

About This Employee Handbook

This Employee Handbook is designed to acquaint employees with NCIRE and to provide information about NCIRE's policies, practices, work rules, and employee benefits. As an NCIRE employee, it is expected that you read, understand, and comply with the provisions of this Employee Handbook.

While no handbook can cover every possible situation or policy related question, employees are encouraged to reach out to their immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Department for clarification. Our HR team is always happy to assist with any questions you may have.

The policies and practices set forth in this Employee Handbook are not intended to create any legally enforceable contract rights or obligations, express or implied, on the part of NCIRE with respect to your employment.

This Employee Handbook supersedes and replaces all previous versions of handbooks, manuals, policies, practices, guidelines, and any descriptions of employment terms and conditions. It also overrides any prior agreements, whether written, oral, expressed, or implied, that relate to the topics covered in this Handbook

NCIRE reserves the right to interpret and administer the provisions of this Employee Handbook as needed. Except for the policy of at-will employment described in this Employee Handbook, the provisions of this Employee Handbook may be amended or canceled in whole or in part at any time, with or without notice, at the sole discretion of NCIRE or because of changes in local, state or federal law.

Any delay or failure by NCIRE to enforce any rule, regulation, or procedure contained in this Employee Handbook will not constitute a waiver of NCIRE's right to do so in the future.

Nothing in this Employee Handbook prohibits or restricts employees from exercising rights or engaging in activities protected by the National Labor Relations Act.

NATURE OF THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP

NCIRE Background Check Policy

NCIRE considers the information obtained through the employment application, references and background checks essential for determining a candidate's eligibility for employment, transfers or promotions within NCIRE.

NCIRE maintains all background information confidentially and secures it in encrypted computer files or locked cabinets.

After making a conditional offer of employment, NCIRE will provide notice including the name and address of the investigative consumer reporting agency conducting the investigation, the nature and scope of the investigation, and a summary of rights.

If NCIRE discovers that an applicant or employee has falsified or provided misleading information or omitted material facts on their resume, employment application or on any document used to secure employment, NCIRE may withhold or withdraw an offer of employment or terminate employment immediately if the person is employed.

NCIRE will not consider (1) any arrests that do not lead to convictions, (2) offenses other than felonies or misdemeanors, (3) convictions more than seven years old, (4) an applicant's referral to, participation in, or completion of a diversion or deferral of judgment program, (5) convictions that have been sealed, dismissed, expunged, statutorily eradicated, pardoned, or has been issued a certificate of rehabilitation, (6) juvenile conviction, determination or adjudication, or (7) a conviction that arises out of conduct that has been decriminalized since the date of the conviction, which is the date of sentencing.

NCIRE may consider these factors when making employment decisions:

- Seriousness, timing, frequency, and likelihood of reoccurrence of the offenses, convictions, and sanctions;
- Relevancy of the offenses, convictions, or sanctions to the position, department and NCIRE's business;
- Potential risk to the health, safety and welfare of NCIRE employees, subjects, patients, data, equipment and property as well as the SFVAHCS campus;
- Potential risk to NCIRE's business interests if the individual is hired or remains employed by NCIRE; and
- Credibility and character of the candidate.

NCIRE will consider any information provided by the applicant before making a final decision. If NCIRE denies an application solely, or in part, because of the applicant's conviction history, NCIRE will notify the applicant as required by applicable law.

Without Compensation Appointment/Federal Background Check Requirements

All NCIRE employees are required to have completed and been approved for a Without Compensation Appointment (WOC) with the San Francisco VA Health Care System (SFVAHCS). A Research Without Compensation (WOC) appointee is an individual who performs research-related duties on a VA research project without any direct monetary compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The WOC appointment gives NCIRE employees the ability to work on the SFVAHCS research and computer systems as well as have access to NCIRE-administered VA-approved research materials, while being covered under the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA). Under the FTCA, the federal government acts as a self-insurer, and recognizes liability for any negligent or wrongful acts, or omissions of its employees acting within the scope of their official duties. The United States is liable to the same extent as an individual would be in like circumstances.

Most NCIRE research projects are intrinsically tied to both the San Francisco VA Health Care System (SFVAHCS) Research program and the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). As such, NCIRE employees must also submit to a Federal background investigation performed by the SFVAHCS and be cleared to obtain what is known as a WOC appointment. The WOC appointment consists of background clearance, online training, fingerprinting, TB tests, education verification, and other components **which may include drug testing. Federal government drug testing includes screening for marijuana.** The WOC appointment is managed by the VA Human Resource Operations Office (HROO). The Federal VA background check may have different criteria than NCIRE regarding:

- (1) any arrests that do not lead to convictions, (2) offenses other than felonies or misdemeanors, (3) convictions more than seven years old, (4) an applicant's participation in or completion of a diversion or deferral of judgment program, and (5) sealed, inoperative or juvenile convictions.

Your need to report certain incidents may differ for the SFVAHCS Federal Government background investigation versus what you are required to report for NCIRE, a California employer. Please check with your SFVAHCS Human Resources Representative if you have questions regarding reporting requirements on your Federal Background forms.

NCIRE is allowed to operate on the SFVAHCS campus, but we are subject to the regulations that are mandated to protect VA research. If at any point during your employment, the SFVAHCS does not grant, revokes or fails to renew your WOC appointment, you may not be allowed to continue your employment with NCIRE.

Licensure, Certification or Registration

Certain roles might need a current license, certification, or registration to legally perform their core duties and meet employment requirements. They may also require credential privileges to conduct research at SFVAHCS. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that all documents are valid and in good standing with the issuing party. Employees whose documentation cannot be verified by the VA credentialing office or NCIRE Human Resources Department, or whose documents are expired or revoked due to misconduct, will be placed on unpaid leave until the required documentation is renewed. In some cases, this may result in termination.

Employment At-Will

Your employment with NCIRE is at-will.

At-will employment means that either the employee or NCIRE may terminate the employment relationship at any time, with or without notice, with or without cause, for any reason whatsoever.

NCIRE does not promise that your employment relationship will continue for a set period of time or specific term, or that your employment relationship can be terminated only under particular circumstances. NCIRE reserves the right to exercise its discretion to change your rate of pay, hours of work, benefits, and job duties, and to impose disciplinary action when warranted.

Only the Executive Director has the authority to enter into any agreement for employment for any specified length of time, or that is contrary to the policy of at-will employment. Any such agreement must be in writing, signed by the Executive Director, and express an unambiguous intent to alter the at-will nature of the employment relationship to be valid.

Nothing in this handbook or in any oral or written statement shall limit the right to terminate employment at-will.

Open Door Policy

NCIRE believes in fostering a positive working environment in which all employees will be able to achieve their highest potential and accordingly maintains an open door policy. The open door policy is designed to encourage employees to discuss work-related concerns or problems with management. Employees are encouraged to express any constructive concerns, raise questions and make suggestions for improvement.

Internal Complaint Procedure

- a) Employees Should Report Any Concerns To Their Supervisor Or Manager. Any employee with concerns about work-related issues, including complaints of discrimination and harassment is encouraged to speak directly with their supervisor or manager. Failing resolution at that level or if the complaint

concerns conduct by an employee's supervisor or manager, then the employee should submit a complaint to the Human Resources Department.

- b) Submit A Complaint To The Human Resources Department. The complaint should set forth in detail the basis for the employee's complaint and the specific relief requested. A representative from the Human Resources Department will meet with the employee and investigate the complaint (including interviewing witnesses and reviewing any evidence and documents) as necessary. As soon as practical after the conclusion of the investigation, the Human Resources Department will notify the employee of the outcome of the investigation and any action taken to resolve the issue. If the issue is not resolved at that level, or if the complaint concerns conduct by an employee's supervisor or manager, the employee should submit a complaint to the Human Resources Department.
- c) Appeal Decision To The Executive Director. If the complaint is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction, the employee may submit a written request for review by the Executive Director. The employee should submit a written request for review within ten (10) working days after receiving the decision from his or her manager or Human Resources Department. The written request for review should state the basis for disagreement with the decision and the specific relief that the employee is seeking. The Executive Director will investigate each complaint received and may interview any witnesses and arrange to meet with the parties involved. As soon as practical after the conclusion of the investigation, the Executive Director will notify the employee of the outcome of any investigation and his or her decision, which will be considered final.

This policy does not require reporting harassment or discrimination to any individual who is allegedly creating harassment or discrimination.

NCIRE will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible. However, NCIRE cannot promise complete confidentiality. NCIRE's duty to investigate and take corrective action may require the disclosure of information to individuals with a need to know.

If an employee files a complaint in good faith, the employee will not be disciplined or otherwise penalized for lodging the complaint. If an employee believes that he or she is being retaliated against for lodging a complaint, the employee should immediately notify the Human Resources Department.

NCIRE Confidential Hotline – 1-844-904-1770

NCIRE's confidential hotline is provided by a third-party administrator (NAVAX Global) so that employees can be confident that work-related concerns can be shared on a confidential and anonymous basis. Complaints will be reviewed, investigated, and addressed by NCIRE.

Examples of work-related concerns which could be referred to the hotline include:

- Violation of the Policy Against Discrimination and Other Workplace Harassment;
- Employee misconduct;
- Supervisor/Manager issues;
- Health or Safety Violations;
- Theft or misuse of NCIRE or VA property;

- Systematic problems with NCIRE programs or operations; or
- Fraud, waste, mismanagement or abuse of research grant or NCIRE funds.

Employees should include sufficient information that will allow a thorough review or investigation of the issue. This information should include the following:

- The particular NCIRE office or department involved;
- The identity of the alleged wrongdoer(s) and related parties;
- The alleged misconduct at issue;
- The effect of the alleged wrongdoing;
- The date(s) when the misconduct occurred; and
- The identity of any witness to the misconduct.

Employees may also elect to provide their contact information including address, phone number, and e-mail address. If identifying information is provided, the caller should advise if they wish to remain anonymous.

Equal Employment Opportunity

NCIRE is an equal opportunity employer that believes in promoting a diverse workplace to create a working environment in which all employees are provided with equal employment opportunities. NCIRE will not discriminate against qualified applicants or employees with respect to any term or condition of employment based on the employee's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, sex (including pregnancy, perceived pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding, or related medical condition), sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, gender expression, transgender status, age, religion (including religious belief, observance, practice, dress, or grooming practices), genetic information, physical or mental disability, legally protected medical condition or information, AIDS/HIV, family care status, domestic partner status, marital status, military or Veteran status, weight or height within the City and County of San Francisco, protected hair styles or hair texture, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws.

NCIRE also prohibits unlawful discrimination against employees and covered persons who associate with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any of the above-listed characteristics.

This policy applies to all areas of employment, including recruitment, hiring, training, promotion, compensation, benefits, transfer, and disciplinary action. The spirit and intent of this policy also applies to all our client, vendor, and professional relationships.

Reasonable Accommodation For Persons With Disabilities

NCIRE is committed to providing equal opportunity in employment to qualified individuals with disabilities. All employment practices, employment decisions, and activities are conducted on a non-discriminatory basis.

NCIRE complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as amended by the ADA Amendments Act; the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA); the California Pregnancy Disability Leave Law (PDL); the California Family Rights Act (CFRA); and all applicable state or local laws.

Consistent with applicable laws, NCIRE may request medical certification to verify the existence of a disability or work restrictions, to identify potential accommodations, or to determine any safety or health risks. In addition, NCIRE may contact an employee's health care provider(s) in appropriate situations. NCIRE will treat information regarding an employee's medical condition and restrictions as confidential, except to the extent that his or her supervisor or manager or other individuals need to know about the employee's medical condition to help with the reasonable accommodation process.

Lactation Breaks and Accommodation

NCIRE provides a reasonable amount of break time to accommodate a female employee's need to express breast milk for the employee's infant child. The requested break time should, if possible, be taken concurrently with other provided break periods. Nonexempt employees should clock out for any lactation breaks that do not run concurrently with normally scheduled rest periods. Any such breaks will be unpaid.

NCIRE provides the employee with the use of a room (other than a bathroom) or other location in close proximity to the employee's work area for the employee to express milk in private. The room shall:

- Be safe, clean, and free of hazardous materials;
- Contain a surface to place a breast pump and personal items;
- Provide a place to sit;
- Be shielded from view and free from intrusion while expressing milk;
- Have access to electricity or alternative devices, including, but not limited to, extension cords or charging stations, needed to operate an electric or battery-powered breast pump.

For the time the room is used for lactation purposes, the use of a room for lactation shall take precedence over any other uses.

NCIRE will provide the employees with access to a sink with running water and a refrigerator suitable for storing milk that is in close proximity to the employee's workspace.

The employee should contact a member of the Human Resources team to request designation of a location and time to express breast milk under this policy. NCIRE will respond to the request within 5 business days.

NCIRE will not take any adverse employment action against an employee in retaliation for requesting reasonable accommodation under this policy.

WORK RULES AND STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

Policy Against Discrimination and Other Workplace Harassment

NCIRE believes in respecting the dignity of each employee and expects every employee to show respect for all coworkers, customers, and vendors. Respectful, professional conduct furthers NCIRE's mission, promotes productivity, minimizes disputes, and enhances our reputation. Accordingly, this policy prohibits discrimination or harassment that is based on an individual's actual or perceived race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex (including pregnancy, perceived pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding or related medical condition), sexual orientation,

gender, gender identity, gender expression, transgender status, age, religion (including religious belief, observance, practice, dress or grooming), creed, physical or mental disability, legally protected medical condition or information, AIDS/HIV, family care status, domestic partner status, marital status, military or Veteran status, weight or height within the City and County of San Francisco, protected hair styles or hair texture, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws. NCIRE is committed to providing a work environment that is free of unlawful discrimination, including harassment that is based on any legally protected characteristic or association with a person who has, or is perceived to have, any of the above-listed characteristics.

Scope of Coverage

These policies prohibit employees, supervisors, managers, officers, directors, vendors, Principal Investigators, research subjects, independent contractors or consultants or agents of NCIRE from engaging in discrimination or harassment of any NCIRE employee or applicant. Similarly, NCIRE will not tolerate harassment by its employees of non-employees with whom NCIRE employees have a business, service, or professional relationship. NCIRE also will attempt to protect employees from harassment by non-employees in the workplace.

Prohibited Conduct

The conduct prohibited by this policy, whether **verbal, written, physical, or visual**, includes any discriminatory employment action and any unwelcome conduct that affects someone because of that individual's protected characteristics and that:

- affects an employee's tangible job benefits;
- unreasonably interferes with work performance; or
- creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Among the types of unwelcome conduct prohibited by this policy are, but are not limited to: epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, intimidating acts, and the circulation or posting of written or graphic materials that show hostility toward individuals because of their protected characteristics. Even where the conduct is not sufficiently severe or pervasive to constitute a violation of the law, NCIRE prohibits any such conduct in the workplace. In addition, conduct prohibited by this policy is unacceptable in any work-related setting outside of the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings, or business-related social events. Employees engaging in such conduct in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Policy Against Sexual Harassment

NCIRE's policies prohibit employees, supervisors, managers, officers, directors, vendors, Principal Investigators, research subjects, independent contractors or consultants, or agents of NCIRE from engaging in sexual harassment. Sexual harassment generally consists of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other **verbal, written, physical, or visual** conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to such conduct becomes an implicit or explicit term or condition of employment;
- submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as the basis for any employment decision; or

- it creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Examples of sexual harassment prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to:

- 1) **Verbal harassment:** requests for sexual favors, unwelcome sexual advances, graphic or degrading conversation containing sexual comments, derogatory comments or slurs about someone's body;
- 2) **Written harassment:** sending sexually suggestive, obscene, or offensive memos, letters, notes, e-mails, or cards;
- 3) **Physical harassment:** offensive physical contact, including grabbing, pinching, patting, or brushing up against another person's body; or
- 4) **Visual harassment:** leering, making sexual gestures, displaying or distributing sexually suggestive cartoons, drawings, pictures, posters, or websites on the Internet.

Sexual harassment does not need to be motivated by sexual desire to be unlawful or to violate this policy. For example, hostile acts toward an employee because of his/her gender can amount to sexual harassment, regardless of whether the treatment is motivated by sexual desire.

Complaint Procedures, Investigation and Corrective Action

Employees at NCIRE can help assure that our workplace is free from discrimination and harassment. Employees are expected to avoid any behavior or conduct that could reasonably be perceived as offensive or harassing.

Employees who feel that they are a victim of discrimination or harassment should report the matter immediately to:

- Their supervisor or manager; or
- the Human Resources Department; or
- the Executive Director.

These are the individuals who are authorized by this policy to receive and act upon complaints of discrimination and/or harassment on behalf of NCIRE.

When NCIRE receives allegations of misconduct, it will immediately undertake a fair, timely, thorough, and objective investigation of the allegations in accordance with all legal requirements.

In addition, and consistent with this policy, NCIRE maintains posters on bulletin boards that provide information about your right to a workplace free of discrimination and harassment. These posters also identify governmental agencies such as the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing ("DFEH") and the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ("EEOC"), either of which an employee may contact directly for information on how and when to file a complaint.

The Department of Fair Employment and Housing at 800-884-1684 or visit <https://www.dfeh.ca.gov/contactus/>.

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission at 800-669-4000 or visit <https://www.eeoc.gov/contact-eeoc/>.

Supervisors must refer all complaints involving harassment, discrimination, retaliation or other prohibited conduct to the Human Resources Department so NCIRE can try to resolve the complaint. Any supervisor or manager who witnesses or becomes aware of discrimination and/or harassment and who fails to take immediate action may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

NCIRE will investigate any reports of inappropriate conduct and will enforce appropriate and effective disciplinary action in accordance with the circumstances involved. NCIRE will maintain confidentiality to the extent possible. However, NCIRE cannot promise complete confidentiality. NCIRE's duty to investigate and take corrective action may require the disclosure of information to individuals with a need to know.

Prompt corrective action will be taken when appropriate. Any employee determined by NCIRE to be responsible for harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or other prohibited conduct will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Harassment Prevention Training

NCIRE provides harassment prevention training to employees as required by law. All supervisors and managers will be required to attend regular training on how to address and prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. Employees may also refer to the Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) at <https://www.dfeh.ca.gov/> to access sexual harassment prevention online training courses.

Policy Against Retaliation

NCIRE prohibits retaliation against any employee for reporting unlawful discrimination or harassment, for assisting another employee or applicant in making a report, for cooperating in an investigation of such a complaint, or for filing an administrative claim with the EEOC or a state governmental agency. Employees who experience or witness any conduct they believe to be retaliatory should immediately follow the reporting procedures as described above.

Policy Against Workplace Violence

NCIRE strictly prohibits employees, supervisors, managers, officers, directors, vendors, Principal Investigators, research subjects, independent contractors or consultants, or agents of NCIRE from behaving in a violent or threatening manner. To prevent workplace violence, NCIRE reserves the right to deal with behavior that suggests a propensity towards violence even prior to any violent behavior occurring.

Prohibited Conduct

NCIRE does not tolerate any form of workplace violence. Conduct prohibited by this policy includes, but is not limited to:

- 1) Threats of any kind (written or verbal);
- 2) Intimidating, bullying, harassing, menacing, hostile, aggressive, or violent physical or verbal acts, including using profanity, fighting;

- 3) Behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury, including stalking and surveillance;
- 4) Behavior that suggests a propensity towards violence;
- 5) Defacing or causing physical damage to company property or intentionally damaging a coworker's property;
- 6) Possession, use, sale or purchase of weapons or firearms of any kind on work premises (including, but not limited to, buildings, outdoor areas, and parking lots), whether during working hours or work-related functions, or while conducting company business; or
- 7) Any conduct that adversely affects legitimate business interests and which could potentially result in violation of any criminal laws relating to threats of violence or violent acts.

Reporting Procedures, Investigation and Corrective Action

Employees who become aware of any conduct that violates this policy should immediately report it to their supervisor, manager, or the Human Resources Director.

If an employee is aware of any conduct that creates a potentially violent or dangerous situation, the employee should immediately call appropriate law enforcement and then contact VA Security at x22003 for help. Employees are expected to cooperate fully with security, law enforcement, emergency and medical personnel that respond to a call for help. Employees must not put themselves in peril, but if qualified, may provide first aid to an injured person.

All reports of workplace violence will be taken seriously and will be investigated. Workplace violence will not be tolerated and could be the basis for immediate disciplinary action, even if not sufficiently serious to constitute a violation of any law. NCIRE will take appropriate corrective action and impose disciplinary action on offending employees, up to and including termination of employment. NCIRE will not tolerate retaliation or intimidation against any employee for making a legitimate report of workplace violence, or for participating in an investigation of such a complaint.

Policy Against Workplace Gambling

Gambling is prohibited on NCIRE or VA premises and is cause for disciplinary action. This includes, but is not limited to, playing cards, dice, betting on horses, or any other wagering. Any employee who is involved with selling or attempting to run betting pools will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy

NCIRE has a strong commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy work environment for its employees. Employees who work under the influence of drugs and alcohol compromise these interests by endangering the health and safety of themselves and other employees. Alcohol and substance abuse in the workplace can cause a number of work-related problems, including absenteeism and tardiness, poor productivity and substandard job performance, an increased workload for co-workers, and inferior quality of service to clients and customers. To further its interest in maintaining a safe and healthy working environment and preventing accidents and injury to its employees and others, NCIRE has a policy against working under the influence of drugs and alcohol. As a condition of continued employment with NCIRE, each employee must abide by this policy.

Policy Against Drugs and Alcohol

This policy applies whenever an employee's conduct may adversely affect NCIRE's interests by:

- 1) Endangering the health or safety of the employee or other employees, supervisors, managers, officers, directors, vendors, Principal Investigators, research subjects, independent contractors or consultants or agents of NCIRE;
- 2) Posing a risk of damage to NCIRE or VA property or equipment;
- 3) Interfering with employee's own performance or others' job performance; or
- 4) Impeding the safe and efficient operation of NCIRE business.

This policy is not limited to employee conduct on the job, but also covers activities that occur:

- 1) On the work premises or facilities (including, but not limited to, buildings, outdoor areas, and parking lots);
- 2) While an employee is conducting or performing work on behalf of NCIRE, regardless of the location, even if it is off work premises;
- 3) In any work-related setting outside of the workplace, such as during business trips, business meetings or business-related social events; or
- 4) While an employee is operating or responsible for the operation, custody, or care of facilities, equipment, property or vehicles owned or leased by NCIRE or VA; or
- 5) While an employee is responsible for the safety of others in connection with, or while performing, NCIRE-related business

Prohibited Conduct

No employee may (1) use, abuse, possess, transfer, transit, share, distribute, manufacture, sell, or be under the influence of any illegal or unauthorized drugs, controlled substances, prescription medication that is not prescribed to the employee, or alcohol, or (2) transfer, share, distribute, transit, manufacture, sell any drug-related paraphernalia.

In cases of reasonable suspicion of possession of illegal or unauthorized drugs, alcohol, or in cases otherwise involving some risk or harm, and in compliance with applicable laws, NCIRE reserves the right to search the employee, an employee's personal belongings, and all NCIRE property. An employee's personal belongings might include, but are not limited to bags, purses, briefcases, clothing, packages, or boxes. In addition, NCIRE may request the assistance of law enforcement officials to search an employee's vehicle as appropriate.

No employee may abuse, sell, purchase, manufacture, distribute, transport, dispense, or possess any legal prescription drug in a manner inconsistent with law.

Additionally, working while impaired by the use of a legal drug is prohibited whenever such impairment might (1) endanger the safety of the employee or some other person, (2) pose a risk of significant damage to NCIRE property or equipment, or (3) substantially interfere with the employee's job performance or the efficient operation of NCIRE's business or equipment.

If an employee is impaired by the appropriate use of legal drugs and the employee may not report to work, the employee may use accrued sick leave or vacation time.

The employee may also contact their Human Resources Generalist to determine whether or not he or she qualifies for an unpaid leave of absence, such as family care or medical leave.

Nothing in this guideline is intended to diminish NCIRE's commitment to employ and reasonably accommodate qualified disabled individuals. NCIRE will reasonably accommodate qualified disabled employees who must take legal drugs because of their disability. The employee is not required to identify the medication or the underlying illness. NCIRE respects the rights of individuals with disabilities concerning the confidentiality of medical information, medical treatment, and the use of prescription drugs and substances taken under medical supervision. Nothing contained in this policy is intended to violate or interfere with individual rights under these laws.

Any employee found to violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. A violation of this policy can be found even if the conduct at issue does not violate any laws or the employee is not criminally prosecuted or convicted for such conduct. As an ongoing condition of employment, employees are required to notify, in writing and within five (5) days of the violation, their supervisor of any criminal drug statute conviction they receive. If you have a substance abuse problem our Employee Assistance Program can assist with resources. Please reach out to Human Resources for help.

Attendance and Punctuality

NCIRE's ability to effectively operate depends upon the cooperation and commitment of each employee. Regular attendance and consistent punctuality is required, as co-workers must inevitably bear the impact of an employee's absence and tardiness. Employees are expected to report and be ready to begin work at their scheduled starting time and should not leave the work premises without prior approval during work hours or prior to the end of a scheduled work shift, except for meal periods and rest breaks as discussed below.

Employees who expect to be absent or late must notify their supervisor as soon as practical, usually before their scheduled workday for each day they will be absent. Failure to properly notify your supervisor in advance of an absence, late arrival or early departure from work, frequent or prolonged unexcused absenteeism or tardiness after an employee has exhausted his or her accrued sick leave, or falsification of time records may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

An employee who is absent due to a non-work-related illness or injury for eight (8) or more consecutive calendar days may apply for state disability benefits. An employee who is absent due to a work-related illness may apply for workers' compensation benefits.

Conflicts of Interest

Employees are expected to devote their best efforts, time, and attention to performing their work duties. Employees are also expected to adhere to high ethical standards and to avoid situations that create an actual or potential conflict of interest. A conflict of interest exists when:

- employees' loyalties or actions are divided between the interests of NCIRE and employees' own personal interests or outside activities;
- employees' loyalties or actions are divided between the interests of NCIRE and those of a competitor, supplier, customer, client, or other party; or
- employees' financial investments or activities adversely affect their ability to carry out their responsibilities to NCIRE or its clients.

Employees who are unsure as to whether a certain transaction, activity, or relationship constitutes a conflict of interest should discuss it with the Human Resources Director, who must approve in writing any exceptions to this policy.

While it is not feasible to describe all possible conflicts of interest that could develop, employees should avoid the following examples of situations that may give rise to a conflict of interest:

- 1) Soliciting or accepting personal gifts, entertainment or payments from competitors, clients, vendors or suppliers that conduct business with NCIRE;
- 2) Simultaneously working for a competitor, customer, client, supplier or vendor while making business decisions on behalf of NCIRE;
- 3) Having a direct or indirect financial or ownership interest in a competitor, customer, client, supplier or vendor that could potentially conflict with business decisions made on behalf of NCIRE;
- 4) Engaging in self-employment in direct competition with NCIRE;
- 5) Misusing or improperly disclosing confidential or proprietary information belonging to NCIRE;
- 6) Using NCIRE's property or labor for personal or third party use;
- 7) Committing NCIRE's financial resources or other forms of support to any outside activity or organization without prior approval from the Executive Director;
- 8) Developing a personal, familial or intimate relationship with an employee of a competitor, customer, client, supplier, or vendor that might interfere with the exercise of impartial judgment in decisions affecting NCIRE; or
- 9) Using NCIRE's letterhead or stationery for correspondence for personal purposes unrelated to firm business.

If an employee or someone with whom an employee has a close relationship (e.g., a family member or close companion) has a financial or employment relationship with a competitor, customer, client, supplier, or vendor with whom the employee is transacting business on behalf of NCIRE, the employee must disclose this fact in writing to the Executive Director.

NCIRE prohibits any form of retaliation for reporting a potential conflict of interest, for violation of this policy, or for cooperating in related investigations.

Failure to comply with this policy, including failure to disclose any conflicts or to seek an exception, may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Consensual Relationships and Non-Fraternization

Non-Fraternization Policy

Although personal relationships between employees may develop in the workplace, employees are prohibited from being involved in an intimate, marital or familial relationship with a client or an employee who is directly or indirectly under their supervision. Any intimate, marital or familial relationships between employees may impose difficulties for supervision, security, safety or morale within the organization. Therefore, NCIRE may, in its sole discretion, modify reporting relationships and reassign job duties to prevent a conflict of interest.

For the purposes of this policy, a familial relationship is any relationship where persons are related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the employee is like that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

Consensual Relationships in the Workplace Policy

No person in a management or supervisory position shall have a romantic or dating relationship with an employee whom he or she directly supervises or whose terms or conditions of employment he or she may influence (examples of terms or conditions of employment include promotion, termination, discipline and compensation).

Individuals involved in a relationship covered by this policy may be asked to sign a document acknowledging that their relationship is entirely consensual and free from coercion and harassment.

Employees are expected to conduct themselves professionally at all times. Workplace dating or romantic relationships must not interfere with any employee's professionalism, including treating others with respect and refraining from behavior that may make others feel uncomfortable (for example, overt physical displays of affection and using sexual language). In particular, management personnel are expected to set a high standard of professional conduct both at work and in any social setting or events sponsored by NCIRE.

A supervisor or manager who has had a previous romantic or dating relationship with a subordinate or employee whose terms and conditions the supervisor or manager oversees or may influence will not be involved in decisions related to that employee's promotion, raises, termination, or other terms and conditions of employment.

NCIRE retains discretion in its enforcement of this policy. Decisions made under this policy will be made based on operational and business reasons and without regard to actual or perceived race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age for individuals over forty years of age, military and veteran status, and sexual orientation, or any other characteristic status protected under federal, state or local law.

Dual Employment with UCSF or VA

VA employees may currently not be hired directly by NCIRE.

UCSF employees may be hired by NCIRE to work on NCIRE administered projects if the work is performed outside of their tour of duty (i.e., regular workweek) and outside their scope of employment with UCSF. The rules surrounding the appointments are complicated and require consultation with NCIRE Human Resources **prior to commencement of any work at UCSF.**

There are two employment mechanisms which may be used in such circumstances, but only one correct one in any given situation. Thus, please consult with your HR representative before accepting a second appointment at UCSF.

- **UCSF Employees** who wish to work on a NCIRE sponsored project may be eligible for a Joint Personnel Agreement (JPA). JPAs are for UCSF faculty and staff who perform research services for NCIRE and are paid through NCIRE administered grants.
- **A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** is used when an individual is working part-time for UCSF and part-time for NCIRE. The total combined hours may not exceed 40 per week and only certain employment classifications are eligible for this type of employment. **Those working 40 hours per week at**

either NCIRE or UCSF are not eligible to work any additional hours with the affiliate. MOU appointments require several pieces of documentation to ensure distinct and separate duties and strong documentation for compliance. Please consult your Human Resources Representative for guidance.

Proper authorization must be obtained in advance of hiring a current UCSF employee due to NCIRE's contractual relationship with our affiliate. Furthermore, current NCIRE employees are required to inform the Human Resources Department if they are considering accepting employment with the VA or UCSF while remaining an NCIRE employee.

Professional Dress Standards

NCIRE strives to provide superior scientific research services that adhere to the highest professional standards. Employees are required to dress in appropriate business casual attire and to behave in a professional, business-like manner at all times. Employees should exercise good judgment in their choice of work clothing and should remember to conduct themselves in a manner that best represents the employee and NCIRE at all times.

NCIRE prohibits unlawful discrimination, harassment and retaliation based on an employee's protected characteristic, including religious dress and protected hairstyles.

Any employee who requires a reasonable accommodation based on any grounds protected by federal, state, or local laws should contact HR. NCIRE prohibits any form of retaliation for requesting reasonable accommodation for an employee's protected characteristic.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in discipline, up to and including termination of employment. Employees may contact HR if they have questions about this policy.

Standards of Conduct

To ensure the best possible work environment, NCIRE expects employees to observe certain standards of job performance and follow rules of conduct. The rules of conduct set forth below and elsewhere in this Employee Handbook are intended to provide employees with examples of prohibited conduct but are not meant to be comprehensive of all conduct which is in violation of company policy. Violation of any company policy or procedure, including any of the policies set forth in this handbook, as revised from time to time, can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. This policy does not alter the at-will nature of employment.

When job performance or conduct does not meet acceptable standards, NCIRE will endeavor, in its sole discretion, to provide employees with a reasonable opportunity to correct the deficiency. If an employee fails to correct the conduct or improve performance, he or she will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Moreover, misconduct not specifically listed below, but which adversely affects the interests of NCIRE, may also lead to disciplinary action, including immediate termination of employment.

Examples of conduct warranting disciplinary action include, but are not limited to:

- Harassment, discrimination, or retaliation against employees, clients, vendors, visitors or third parties;

- Providing false information or omitting material facts on any documents in connection with NCIRE employment including, but not limited to job applications, resumes, employment, medical, payroll, financial or time keeping records;
- Violation of the Policy Against Workplace Violence, including engaging in violent or abusive or conduct that disrupts the workflow or work of others, or possession, use, sale or purchase of weapons on work premises, during work hours, or while performing work-related functions;
- Violation of the Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace Policy, including possession, use, sale or purchase of illegal drugs or controlled substances on work premises, during working hours, or while performing work-related functions;
- Poor performance, unsatisfactory work quality or quantity;
- Unauthorized use, theft or damage of any NCIRE or VA property or the property of any employee or client;
- Removing or borrowing NCIRE/VA property without prior authorization;
- Being convicted of a crime that indicates unfitness for the job or raises a threat to the safety or well-being of NCIRE, its employees, customers, and property;
- Failing to report to NCIRE, within five business days, any conviction under any criminal drug statute for a violation occurring in the workplace;
- Insubordination, including but not limited to failure or refusal to obey the lawful order or instruction of any supervisor, Principal Investigator, or management official;
- Violation of the applicable policies regarding use of the office's computers, e-mail, Internet, phones and voicemail systems;
- Failing to notify the appropriate immediate supervisor as soon as practical when unable to report for work;
- Failing to obtain permission to leave work for any reason during normal working hours;
- Failing to observe work schedules, including rest and meal periods;
- Failing to provide a doctor's certificate when requested or required to do so;
- Sleeping or malingering on the job;
- Violating any safety, health, or security policy, rule, or procedure of NCIRE; or
- Committing a fraudulent act or a breach of trust, including but not limited to breaches of ethical conduct or unauthorized disclosure of business "secrets" or other confidential obligations in any circumstances.

The Standards of Ethical Conduct

NCIRE is a federal research institute subject to the Federal Standards of Ethical Conduct. NCIRE and its employees must follow VA policy and guidelines as well as Ethical Practices and Procedures in all research practices and when addressing alleged violations of ethical standards in research. Employees who have questions or need additional information pertaining to these regulations should consult the Human Resources Department.

Driving for Work Policy

NCIRE is committed to ensuring the health and safety of its employees. When driving for work-related activities, NCIRE requires employees to take measures to protect themselves and others from risk of injuries or accidents.

Responsibilities

Employees whose work responsibilities require them to drive must produce and maintain a valid driver's license and automobile insurance for minimum liability coverage in the state where they work. Employees must use their own vehicle and, in doing, so assume full responsibility and risk of driving.

Employees whose work responsibilities require them to drive will also be required to submit to a Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) background check, which may be performed periodically or as necessary as determined by the NCIRE HR Department. Information obtained in the DMV check will be used to assess the driver's current license status and safe driving record and any potential liability for NCIRE.

This may result in an adverse employment action, or job duties may need to be modified.

The safety of the driver and others is of utmost importance. It is the employee's responsibility to notify their supervisor if they are unable to drive safely due to any internal or external conditions that may impair their ability to drive.

Car Rentals

Employees who rent a vehicle for work through a private rental company or city car share program must confirm that their own automobile insurance policy can provide coverage for the rented vehicle. If this is not an option, the employee will be required to purchase Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) or Loss Damage Waiver (LDW) coverage offered by the rental car company.

Safety

The employee is required to take all safety precautions and adhere to all driving and traffic laws. Safety precautions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) All occupants, as required by law, must wear seat belts whenever the vehicle is in motion.
- 2) Regular preventative maintenance should be performed on the vehicle as suggested by the vehicle owner's manual.

No alcohol or drugs (illegal and/or prescription that could impair abilities) should be consumed prior to, or while operating the vehicle.

The use of all handheld mobile devices including cell phones, smart phones, tablets, personal organizers, or other devices for work purposes while driving or for personal purposes while driving during work hours or on NCIRE business is strictly prohibited, except in emergency situations, when a "hands free" device such as a headset or car kits, must be used. Special care should be taken in situations where there is heavy traffic, inclement weather, or the employee is driving in an unfamiliar area. Employees must adhere to all federal, state, and local rules and regulations regarding the use of mobile devices while driving. Under no circumstances are employees allowed to use text devices to type or review text messages for work purposes while driving or for personal purposes while driving during work hours or on NCIRE business.

In the unfortunate event of an accident, employees are required to alert the police, seek medical attention if necessary, report the incident to their insurance company, and file any DMV reports. Employees must also report the accident to their Principal Investigators/Managers and the NCIRE HR Department as soon as possible. The NCIRE HR Department will assist the employee with applicable leave as necessary.

Travel Reimbursement

Employees whose work responsibilities require them to drive and use their own vehicle will be reimbursed at a standard rate per mile as set by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which may be subject to change from time to time. The cost of routine repairs to an employee's vehicle, replacement tires, gasoline, or other auto expenses, including fines resulting from violations of motor vehicle regulations, **are not subject to reimbursement.**

Employees who receive prior approval to rent a car will be reimbursed for expenses associated with the car rental (including gas) but will not receive mileage reimbursement.

For current information about travel reimbursement, please refer to NCIRE's Accounting Policies & Procedures Manual, Chapter 2 on the NCIRE Intranet.

Whistleblower Policy

NCIRE is committed to the highest standards of corporate ethics and legal compliance. This Whistleblower Policy establishes a system to provide all individuals associated with NCIRE a means to report concerns about financial reporting or suspected violations of its policies and procedures, or national, state, or local laws and regulations.

Scope

This policy applies to all Board members and staff, and to laboratories that are organizationally related or affiliated with NCIRE. Any employee, supervisor, manager, partner, officer, director, vendor, subject, independent contractor or agent of NCIRE.

Directors, managers, supervisors, employees and anyone contractually working for NCIRE have an ethical responsibility to report any violations or possible violations of NCIRE's policies and procedures, or national, state or local laws and regulations.

Examples of compliance issues that require reporting include but are not limited to:

- perceived systematic problems with NCIRE programs or operations
- improper use or storage of chemicals
- violations of research protocols
- theft, bribes or kickbacks
- fraudulent transactions
- conflicts of interest
- computer tampering
- improper political activity within the workplace
- improper or unauthorized expenditures of grant funds or NCIRE funds
- any action to fraudulently influence, coerce, manipulate or mislead authorities
- lack of compliance to VA established standards

How Complaints May Be Made

NCIRE believes in fostering a positive working environment in which all individuals are empowered and encouraged to come forward with information to express any constructive concerns or issues. To that end, NCIRE has adopted an “Open Door Policy”, and we have implemented several ways that an individual may report concerns. An individual may report their concerns via:

- their supervisor or Manager
- NCIRE Confidential Hotline
- contacting the Director of Human Resources x26109
- contacting any member of NCIRE’s Executive Management Team
- contacting the Compliance and Business Integrity office of the SFVAHC system

Anonymity

When an employee reports an issue, they may choose whether to identify themselves. If anonymity is requested, then the employee will be assigned a unique, confidential identifier for the purposes of further communication. If the whistleblower self-discloses their identity, NCIRE will no longer be obligated to maintain such confidentiality.

Nature of Report

Submissions should be factual. Reporting persons should avoid speculation and be as specific as possible. This will help others better assess the nature, extent and urgency of preliminary investigation procedures. The submission should, to the extent feasible, contain at least the following information:

- the alleged event, matter or issue that is the subject of the submission
- the names of the persons involved and their department or departments
- if the submission involves a specific event or events with relevant date(s)
- the location where such event occurred
- additional information, documentation or other evidence available

Post-Submission Procedures

Information provided by the Whistleblower is treated confidentially and as privileged to the extent permitted by applicable law. Reporting persons should be aware that if the incident requires government authority or SFVAHCS involvement, the reporting person may have to reveal the employee’s identity as part of the investigation. The identity of the reporting person may also be disclosed if necessary to comply with the law, or to provide the accused individual with their legal rights or defense

Rights of Employees Under the Whistleblower Policy

NCIRE will not retaliate against an employee in the terms and conditions of employment because that employee: (a) reports to a supervisor, senior management of NCIRE, Human Resources, the Board of Directors or to a federal, state or local agency what the employee believes in good faith to be a violation of the law; or (b) participates in good faith in any resulting investigation or proceeding, or (c) exercises his or her rights under any state or federal law(s) or regulation(s) to pursue a claim or take legal action to protect the employee’s rights.

NCIRE will swiftly and thoroughly investigate any action against an employee who believes they have been the target of retaliatory conduct in violation of this policy. In addition, NCIRE will not, with the intent of retaliation, take any harmful action to any employee who has provided to law enforcement personnel or a court truthful information relating to the commission or possible commission by NCIRE or any of its employees of a violation of any applicable law or regulation.

Pets in the Workplace Policy

NCIRE is responsible for assuring the health and safety of all employees. In keeping with this objective, NCIRE does not permit employees to bring their household pets to work. Our policy is aligned with the San Francisco VA Health Care System, which prohibits pets of any kind, except for service animals.

Animals may pose a threat of infection and may cause allergic reactions in other employees. Some employees may feel threatened or be distracted by the presence of animals, particularly dogs.

An employee who requires the help of a animal service will be permitted to bring a service animal to the office, provided that the animal's presence does not create a danger to others and does not impose an undue hardship upon the company.

A service animal is any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability. The task(s) performed by the dog must be directly related to the person's disability.

For questions regarding this policy, please contact Human Resources. Any employee that requires reasonable accommodation based on any grounds protected by federal, state, or local laws should contact HR. NCIRE prohibits any form of retaliation for requesting a reasonable accommodation for an employee's physical or mental disability, qualifying medical condition, or other characteristics..

SAFE AND HEALTHY WORKING CONDITIONS

Safety

NCIRE is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace and follows the established San Francisco Veterans Affairs Health Care System (SFVAHCS) procedures to prevent personal injury to employees and damage to office property that may result from a potentially unsafe situation. In keeping with this commitment, NCIRE's established Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) is part of the existing SFVAHCS hospital program. Employees may request a copy of SFVAHCS/NCIRE IIPP from the Human Resources Director.

Employees may be required to attend safety training specific to their laboratory and area of research as part of the comprehensive IIPP at the SFVAHCS. Employees are required to follow NCIRE and SFVAHCS lab safety procedures and policies at all times. NCIRE also provides information to employees about workplace safety and health issues through periodic electronic mailings, bulletin board postings, memos, and other written communications.

Although the Human Resources Director is responsible for implementing, administering, monitoring and evaluating the program, the success of the program depends on the commitment of all employees. Because some of the best safety improvement ideas come from

employees, those with ideas, concerns or suggestions for improved safety in the workplace are encouraged to raise them with their supervisor or the Human Resources Director.

Employees are expected to obey health and safety rules and must immediately report any unsafe condition to their supervisor or the Human Resources Director. Employees who violate safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or who fail to report or remedy an unsafe condition, may be subject to immediate disciplinary action, including termination of employment. All reports of unsafe working conditions will be taken seriously and will be investigated.

Employees who violate safety standards, cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or fail to report or remedy an unsafe condition may be subject to immediate disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

NCIRE will not tolerate retaliation or intimidation against any employee who makes a legitimate report concerning workplace safety or participates in an investigation of such a complaint.

Smoking

In compliance with state law and in keeping with NCIRE's intent to provide a safe and healthy work environment, smoking inside work facilities is strictly prohibited. Smoking is permitted only during authorized rest breaks and meal periods and may take place only outside of work premises off the SFVAHCS campus.

For purposes of this policy, smoking includes, but is not limited to, lighting, smoking, or carrying a lighted cigarette, cigar, or pipe and the use of any electronic smoking device.

Violation of this policy may result in discipline, up to and including termination. No employee shall be retaliated against for reporting a violation of this policy or cooperating in related investigations.

PROPERTY BELONGING TO NCIRE

Confidential and Proprietary Information

The protection of confidential and proprietary information pertaining to NCIRE, employees, clients, customers, business, and operations is vital to the interests and success of NCIRE and therefore constitutes one of its most vital assets. Confidential and proprietary information includes, but is not limited to trade secrets, research, research protocols, patient files, personnel files, employee compensation information and identifying data, computer records, financial data, pricing policies, marketing and business plans, strategies, forecasts, method of operations, process descriptions, research plans, formulas; electronic codes, computer programs, software developed or customized by NCIRE to store and sort client, customer, research data, or business information. This confidential and proprietary information remains at all times the property of NCIRE.

As a condition of employment with NCIRE, employees must keep this information strictly confidential. Employees shall not, during the course of their employment, or at any time after termination of employment, use or disclose any confidential and proprietary information to any person or entity for any reason or purpose whatsoever, directly or indirectly, except as may be required to perform work for NCIRE.

Nothing in this guideline restricts an employee from discussing his or her wages or other terms and conditions of employment with coworkers or others, to the extent protected by law.

Upon termination of employment, employees must return to the Human Resources Department all originals and copies of all documents containing such confidential and proprietary information, whether contained in documents, diskettes, computer records, and/or recorded in written or electronic form.

Employees who improperly use or disclose confidential or proprietary information or fail to take proper precautionary measures to guard against disclosure of such information, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, even if they do not actually benefit from the information that is improperly used or disclosed.

Work Areas, Equipment and Property

NCIRE provides its employees with the use of equipment, property and facilities that are necessary for the performance of their work. NCIRE retains full title and control, including the right of inspection, over such equipment, property and facilities. Employees must obtain prior written authorization before any property is removed from work premises. Employees who willfully lose or damage work equipment or property will be responsible for reimbursing the actual cost or replacement value of the item.

Employee privacy rights do not extend to work-related conduct or the use of work areas, company-owned equipment or supplies. All offices, work areas, furniture, desks, lockers, file cabinets, files, computer disks and files, and other storage devices for employees remain the property of NCIRE. Therefore, any agent or representative of NCIRE can inspect any articles found within them at any time, with or without prior notice. In addition, in cases of reasonable suspicion of the possession of illegal drugs, alcohol, firearms, weapons or stolen property, or in cases otherwise involving some risk or harm, NCIRE reserves the right to search an employee's personal belongings, including any bags, purses, briefcases, and clothing. Furthermore, NCIRE may request the assistance of law enforcement officials in order to search an employee's vehicle as appropriate. In emergencies or other appropriate circumstances involving suspected misconduct, NCIRE reserves the right to conduct an inspection without the presence of the employee involved. A refusal to permit a search may result in immediate disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

Electronic Mail (E-Mail) and Voicemail

NCIRE's computer system and telephone systems allow employees to create, send, receive, and transfer e-mail and voice mail communications. These systems are operated through and maintained by the VA for NCIRE's benefit. NCIRE is required to comply with all SFVAHCS information e-mail and systems security rules and policies which limit employee use of these systems for company business only. Furthermore, employees must not attempt to gain access to another employee's personal files or e-mail messages. The use of any NCIRE resources for electronic mail must be related to NCIRE business, including research pursuits.

NCIRE's policy against unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment, anti-discrimination, or commitment to equal employment opportunity, extends to the use of computers, the Internet, and any component of the communications systems. Under no circumstances shall employees use NCIRE's computer system and telephone system to transmit, receive, or store any information that is discriminatory, harassing, defamatory, obscene, indecent, threatening, or that

otherwise could adversely affect any individual, group, or entity (e.g., sexually explicit or racial messages, slurs, jokes, or cartoons).

Other prohibited uses of electronic mail include but are not limited to:

- Using NCIRE's electronic mail resources for personal monetary gain or for commercial purposes that are not directly related to NCIRE business or that are contrary to the best interests of NCIRE
- Unlawful activity
- Copying, retrieving, forwarding, or sending copyrighted materials unless the employee has the author's permission or is accessing a single copy only for the employee's reference
- Sending or forwarding chain letters or their equivalent such as spam
- Violating any NCIRE policy
- Disclosing confidential or proprietary information of NCIRE or third parties
- Attempting unauthorized access to electronic mail or attempting to breach any security measures on any electronic mail system All messages sent and received, including personal messages, and all data and information stored on NCIRE's computer systems (including on its electronic mail system or voicemail system) are NCIRE property regardless of the content. NCIRE reserves the right to review messages to ensure compliance with NCIRE and VA rules, at any time, in its sole discretion, without notice to the employee and/or in the employee's absence.

On occasion, NCIRE may need to access its computer systems including computer files, electronic mail messages, and voicemail messages. Employees should understand, therefore, that they have no right of privacy with respect to any messages or information created, collected, or maintained on NCIRE's computer systems, including personal information or messages. NCIRE may, at its discretion, inspect all files or messages on its computer systems at any time for any reason. NCIRE may also monitor its computer systems at any time in order to confirm compliance with its policies, for purposes of legal proceedings, to investigate misconduct, to locate information, or for any other business purpose.

Duplication of Software

NCIRE prohibits the duplication of purchased software for use on other personal computers internally or externally, without the appropriate license agreements. NCIRE prohibits adding personally owned software to company machines. You must have written authorization from your manager and the Information Systems Department prior to adding any personal software or altering existing software on NCIRE computers.

Company Communication

NCIRE provides all employees with an [NCIRE.org](https://www.ncire.org) electronic mail account upon hire. This web-based electronic system allows employees the flexibility to use or read electronic mail any time and from any location. All official company communication will be sent to this account only. Official company communications may consist of corporate policy changes, benefits information, NCIRE events, NCIRE newsletters, etc. Employees are responsible for checking this account often and for reading all company communication. Employees are expected to adhere to the electronic mail policy.

Social Media Policy

Use of social media (e.g., Facebook, X, LinkedIn, etc.) presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities. To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, NCIRE has established these guidelines for appropriate use.

This policy applies to all employees who work for NCIRE.

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, social media can mean many things. Social media includes all means of communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's web log or blog, journal or diary, personal web site, social networking or affinity web site, web bulletin board or a chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with NCIRE and the San Francisco Veterans Affairs Health Care System (SFVAHCS), as well as any other form of electronic communication.

The same principles and guidelines found in NCIRE and SFVAHCS policies apply to your activities online. Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, consider some of the risks and rewards that are involved. Keep in mind that any of your conduct that adversely affects your job performance, the performance of fellow associates or otherwise adversely affects members, customers, suppliers, and people who work on behalf of NCIRE or NCIRE's legitimate business interests may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Know and follow the rules

Carefully read these guidelines, the NCIRE computer use policy, and the NCIRE Equal Employment Opportunity Policy and Policy Against Harassment, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, and threats of violence or similar inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Likewise, postings that disclose confidential/proprietary information, trade secrets, or employee/resident information protected from disclosure by law will not be tolerated.

Be respectful

Always be fair and courteous to fellow associates, customers, residents, suppliers or people who work on behalf of NCIRE and the SFVAHCS. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing policies set forth in this Handbook than by posting complaints to a social media outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening or intimidating, that disparage customers, residents, associates or suppliers, or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law or company policy.

Be honest and accurate

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that

you know to be false about NCIRE, fellow associates, residents, customers, suppliers, people working on behalf of NCIRE or competitors.

Post only appropriate and respectful content

Maintain the confidentiality of NCIRE trade secrets and private or confidential information. Trade secrets may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, products, know-how, and technology. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures or other internal business-related confidential communications.

Do not create a link from your blog, website or other social networking site to a NCIRE website without identifying yourself as an NCIRE employee.

Express only your personal opinions. Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for NCIRE. If NCIRE is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an employee and make it clear that your views do not represent those of NCIRE, fellow employees, residents, customers, suppliers or people working on behalf of NCIRE. If you do publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with NCIRE, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of NCIRE. It is best to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of NCIRE."

Using social media at work

Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment we provide, unless it is work-related as authorized by your manager or consistent with our policies. Do not use your NCIRE email addresses to register on social networks, blogs or other online tools utilized for personal use.

Retaliation is prohibited

NCIRE prohibits taking negative action against any employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any employee who retaliates against another employee for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Nothing in this policy is intended to restrict communication or actions protected or required by state or federal law, including the National Labor Relations Act such as discussing wages, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Use Policy

Purpose

This policy sets guidelines for responsible and ethical AI use within NCIRE, aiming to prevent misuse, disclosure of confidential information, unethical outcomes, inaccuracies, and security breaches.

Definitions

- Artificial Intelligence (AI): Systems that perform tasks requiring human-like intelligence, including machine learning and generative AI.
- Generative AI: AI models that create text, images, code, or other content.
 - Confidential Information: Any information relating to NCIRE or its business activities that could potentially cause harm if disclosed without authorization.
 - Sensitive Data: Information that is protected by law or regulations, including but not limited to personally identifiable information, protected health information, and financial data.
 - Qualified Personnel: An NCIRE employee who is a subject matter expert in the area for which the AI output is generated.

Policy Statement

NCIRE embraces the use of advanced technologies and recognizes the transformative potential of AI to advance many aspects of administrative operations, research and health care delivery. However, with these benefits comes the responsibility to ensure AI is used properly, ethically, and in alignment with organizational values and regulatory requirements.

AI systems must operate in a manner that is understandable, explainable, and accessible to users; enable users to question or challenge AI outputs and provide feedback for continuous improvement; provide training and guidelines so users understand AI capabilities, limitations, and risks; and disclose limitations, potential biases, and known risks associated with AI models/agents.

Scope

This policy applies to all NCIRE employees and all research personnel who work on NCIRE administered research projects.

Roles and Responsibilities

To promote strong governance and ensure compliance with this AI Use Policy, the organization defines clear responsibilities for all parties involved:

NCIRE Human Resources (HR):

Responsible for policy enforcement, managing investigations, and administering disciplinary actions in alignment with organizational standards.

NCIRE Information Technology (IT):

Oversees technical compliance, including approving AI tools, validating security measures, and ensuring data privacy. All AI tools must be reviewed and approved by NCIRE's Director of Information Technology and/or the SFVAMC designated NCIRE AI governance. Approved tools will be listed in the AI Tool Inventory section at the end of this policy. NCIRE IT maintains a formal process for evaluating and approving AI tools.

The Director of Information Systems, in collaboration with the Director of Human Resources and the Chief Executive Officer, is responsible for identifying approved AI tools and for ensuring that only NCIRE-approved tools are used.

Department Heads and Managers:

Accountable for monitoring day-to-day AI usage within their teams, ensuring employees adhere to policy requirements, and escalating concerns promptly.

All NCIRE Employees:

Share responsibility for ethical AI use and must report suspected misuse through designated channels. This collaborative approach ensures transparency, accountability, and alignment with organizational values.

Data Privacy and Protection

In general, free public versions of AI systems should not be used for work related tasks because these systems may use submitted data for model training or other purposes. Only enterprise-graded and organization-approved AI systems that provide assurances regarding data handling and privacy should be used. If you are unsure whether a particular AI system includes data privacy assurances, please get in touch with the NCIRE IT Helpdesk for assessment.

Prohibited Uses

- Uploading Personally Identifiable Information (PII), Protected Health Information (PHI), confidential information, or proprietary data to non-approved platforms.
- Creating misleading, harmful, discriminatory, or offensive content using AI tools.
- Circumventing organizational security protocols by accessing unauthorized AI tools or systems.
- Using AI for decisions without human review.
- Impersonating individuals or fabricating data, research results, or official documents through AI.
- Deploying AI systems without validating accuracy, bias, or compliance with organizational and legal standards.
- Using AI for any activity that violates applicable laws, regulations, or organizational policies.
- Using unapproved AI tools.
- Relying upon AI Tools to produce finished work products without fully verifying the accuracy of the entire output.
- Infringing the intellectual property rights of content creators by copying and using outputs without appropriate attribution.

Permissible Uses

- Summarizing information, improving clarity, organization, grammar, and readability of text.
- Assisting with calculations, performing basic analyses, and identifying inconsistencies or anomalies in data.

- Summarizing proposal components, highlighting key requirements, and identifying potential compliance considerations (without replacing formal legal review).
- Comparing datasets, trends, tables, or project information to support internal decision making.
- Revising emails, internal memos, and other non confidential communications for clarity and tone.
- Cross checking datasets or verifying whether information is complete, consistent, or aligned with provided criteria. Conducting preliminary research on publicly available laws, regulations, policies, and industry standards (with human validation required).
- Assisting with contract, grant, and policy analysis by identifying sections, summarizing clauses, and flagging items for human follow up.
- Drafting outlines, checklists, or structured frameworks for projects, proposals, or planning documents.
- Generating non sensitive administrative content such as meeting agendas, project timelines, role descriptions, and process documentation.
- Supporting brainstorming sessions by providing general ideas or approaches (not final decisions or deliverables).

Accountability and Human Oversight

NCIRE is committed to ensuring that all AI use reflects ethical standards, complies with legal requirements, and aligns with organizational values. While AI can enhance efficiency and innovation, it must always function as a supporting resource, not a substitute for human judgment in decisions involving ethical, legal, or strategic considerations. Human oversight remains central, and individuals using AI tools are fully responsible for monitoring, validating, and acting on AI outputs.

Core Principles of Accountability

- **Human Oversight:** All AI-generated outputs must be reviewed and validated by qualified personnel before being applied to critical decisions such as patient care, financial approvals, or employment actions.
- **Training and Awareness:** Mandate periodic training on ethical AI use, data privacy, and tool-specific guidance. All employees must complete annual AI ethics and compliance training as assigned.
- **Responsibility for Actions:** Users remain fully accountable for any decisions or actions based on AI outputs. Reliance on AI does not diminish personal or professional responsibility.
- **Verification and Validation:** Critical outputs in AI systems should be cross-checked against trusted sources or established processes to ensure accuracy, fairness, and compliance.
- **Error Reporting:** Follow a clear process for reporting, correcting, and documenting inaccurate or harmful outputs promptly.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly retrain and update AI models to reduce bias, improve accuracy, and align with evolving standards.
- **Ethical Use:** AI must never be used to bypass organizational policies, fabricate data, or impersonate individuals.

By adhering to these principles, NCIRE ensures that AI remains a tool for innovation while safeguarding integrity, accountability, and trust.

Compliance

Use of AI in Employment Decisions

All AI assisted employment processes must be explicitly reviewed and approved by an employee in Human Resources to comply with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) guidelines and organizational non-discrimination policies. Human judgment and oversight remain central, and qualified individuals, not automated systems, make all final employment decisions.

Use of AI with Sponsors

In addition, users must check with the respective funding agencies for specific AI use policies and requirements before incorporating AI into any funded research project. Compliance with agency-specific guidelines is mandatory.

National Institutes of Health (NIH) mandates that grant applications must represent the investigator's original work. Applications or sections substantially developed by AI will not be considered original and may be deemed non-compliant.

Department of Defense (DoD) focuses on responsible and ethical use of AI. The department's AI ethical principles encompass five major areas:

- Responsible: Human accountability for AI decisions.
- Equitable: Minimize unintended bias in AI systems.
 - Traceable: Ensure transparency and auditability of AI models and processes
- Reliable: Test and validate AI systems for safety and effectiveness throughout their lifecycle.
- Governable: Maintain human control and the ability to deactivate AI systems when necessary.

Reporting Non-Compliance with This Policy

If any employee becomes aware of an actual or potential violation of this Policy, or has reason to believe that any of the following has been downloaded to or installed on NCIRE's networks, systems, or devices, the employee must promptly disclose this fact to Human Resources, with all relevant documents and information:

- An unapproved AI Tool, if usage requires a license.
- An AI Tool that has not been approved for use according to this Policy.
- An AI Tool that is used outside of the approved manner or scope.
- An AI Tool that poses an identified, unaddressed security risk or contains any material defects or malicious code.

NCIRE prohibits any form of discipline, reprisal, intimidation, or retaliation for reporting a violation of this Policy. Any such conduct should immediately be reported to Human Resources.

Violations of This Policy

NCIRE will investigate any alleged violation of this Policy and take whatever steps it deems necessary to address any violation of this Policy that is found to have occurred.

Administration of This Policy

NCIRE expressly reserves the right to change, modify, or delete the provisions of this Policy without notice. Human Resources is responsible for the administration of this Policy. If you have any questions regarding this Policy or questions about using AI Tools in the workplace that are not addressed in this Policy, please contact the Human Resources Department.

References

Microsoft Copilot Enterprise Data Protection

<https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/copilot/microsoft-365/enterprise-data-protection>

National Institutes of Health (NIH) AI Use Policy

<https://osp.od.nih.gov/policies/artificial-intelligence/>

EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND RECORDS

Employment Records

NCIRE maintains personnel files for each employee. These files include confidential information such as the employee's job application, resume, documentation of performance appraisals and salary increases, and other employment records.

Employee's Duty To Report Accurate Information And Any Changes To Personnel Data

NCIRE relies upon the accuracy of information contained in the employment application, as well as the accuracy of other data presented during the hiring process and throughout your employment. Any misrepresentations, falsifications, or material omissions in your employment records may result in termination of employment.

Employees are responsible for informing the Human Resources Department of any changes in their personnel data (including name changes, home addresses, telephone numbers, marital status, number of dependents, and individuals to be contacted in the event of an emergency). Such information should be accurate and current at all times.

Access To Employment Records

Personnel files are the property of NCIRE, and access to the information contained therein is restricted. Generally, only those who have a legitimate need to review the information are allowed to do so. The Human Resources Department will arrange a mutually convenient time within twenty-one (21) days of the employee's request to allow the employee or the employee's representative to review the employee's personnel files in the office and in the presence of an NCIRE-designated employee responsible for maintaining personnel files.

Confidentiality of Medical Information

Medical information about employees is treated with strict confidentiality and only those with a legitimate business need to know such information will be given access. NCIRE will take reasonable precautions to protect such information from inappropriate disclosure and maintain the confidentiality of employee medical information. Anyone who inappropriately discloses such information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Performance Evaluations

NCIRE conducts performance reviews to provide feedback about an employee's performance, cooperation, diligence, accuracy, and attendance, and also to discuss job tasks, identify opportunities, and recognize strengths. These reviews are designed to examine the progress made since the last review and to set goals for future development. Employees will have an opportunity to meet with their supervisor or manager to discuss their performance evaluation.

Although employees may be coached, evaluated or disciplined at any time during the year, performance reviews generally are conducted for all employees annually in April. These performance reviews may consist of an evaluation of the employee's work progress throughout the year, and may include commendations, future goals and suggestions for improvement. A poor evaluation may result in corrective action or termination of employment.

Compensation and Adjustments

NCIRE makes pay adjustments in its sole discretion. The decision to award such an adjustment is dependent upon a number of factors, including the information documented by the formal performance evaluation process and NCIRE's evaluation of outside market data and business conditions.

Merit Increase

Eligibility for a merit increase requires that the employee successfully meet all the performance standards for the position they occupy at the end of the annual performance review. Employees must be on the payroll at least ninety (90) days prior to the end of the rating period (March 31st) to be eligible for a merit increase. However, successfully meeting the performance standards alone does not entitle an employee to a merit increase.

Promotions

Employees may be eligible for a promotion when they transfer to a different job classification with a higher salary range; however, employees transferring laterally into a new position with an equivalent salary range will not receive a salary increase.

Promotion and salary increases shall be at least the minimum of the new salary range and are limited to one (1) promotion in any six-month period. Promotion salary increases must be approved by the Human Resources Director. Furthermore, requests for retroactive promotion will not be accepted.

Special Contribution Awards – Discretionary Cash or Time Off

Special Contribution Awards are one-time discretionary cash and/or time-off awards that are given to recognize outstanding achievements above and beyond position requirements (e.g., work on a special project or performance exceeding job requirements on a particular assignment or task). Supervisors and managers can nominate employees within their own departments for a maximum benefit of 10% during the same fiscal year (October 1st to September 30th).

Discretionary cash awards do not increase the base salary of employees. Furthermore, time-off awards are not designed to provide compensatory time off in lieu of overtime pay. For more information regarding eligibility and guidelines for these awards, please contact the Human Resources Department.

Resignation

Resignation is a voluntary act initiated by the employee to terminate employment with NCIRE. Although advance notice is not required, NCIRE requests at least two (2) weeks' notice from employees to allow for a smooth transition of work and any workload adjustments.

. All departing employees are required to return all office supplies, equipment, keys and property belonging to NCIRE to the Human Resources Department or their research lab on or before their last day of employment.

Employment References

NCIRE endeavors to limit its response to employment reference inquiries about present and former employees to confirm the position held and dates of employment. Information regarding salary or wages earned will not be provided per California state law.

Employees who receive a request for information about a former employee must refer the person making the request to the Human Resources Department. Only Human Resources Department may verify employment information. Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

PAYROLL AND TIMEKEEPING

Paydays

Pay periods are biweekly, every other Friday, resulting in 26 pay periods in a calendar year. Paydays will be the Friday following the end of the pay period. If payday falls on a holiday, employees will be paid on the preceding workday.

Direct Deposit

Employees can designate a banking institution or credit union for automatic direct deposit of their paychecks. They may set direct amounts to savings, with the balance deposited into their checking account. Required enrollment and consent forms must be completed before an employee can be paid by direct deposit.

Wage Garnishments

NCIRE encourages all employees to meet their financial obligations to avoid NCIRE incurring the administrative costs of garnishments and wage assignments. Nonetheless, NCIRE will adhere to legally imposed wage assignments and garnishments and will not modify the terms of those legal arrangements unless ordered to by a court of competent jurisdiction. NCIRE will deduct the administrative costs of complying with wage assignment and garnishment orders to the amount allowed by law.

Office Hours

NCIRE's standard business hours are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. The following schedules are available to employees with the written approval of their supervisor:

First:	7:30 am to 4:00 pm	Third:	8:30 am to 5:00 pm
Second:	8:00 am to 4:30 pm	Fourth:	9:00 am to 5:30 pm

Staffing needs and operational requirements for individual units may necessitate variations in starting and ending times as well as variations in the total hours that may be scheduled each day and week. Employees will be informed by their supervisor of their expected schedule.

Work Day and Work Week Defined

For purposes of preparing timesheets, daily logs, or payroll, the *Work Day* is defined as the 24-hour period that runs from 12:01 a.m. until 12:00 midnight, and the *Work Week* is defined as Sunday at 12:01 a.m. to Saturday at 12:00 a.m. (midnight).

Alternative Work Schedules

Alternative work schedules (flextime, compressed work week, telecommuting, etc.) are not permitted without advance written approval from the Executive Director and Human Resources Director. Requests for alternative work schedules must be in writing and must be based on a legitimate business reason. The unit of employees interested in and/or affected by an alternative work schedule will then participate in an election. This is a multistep process that allows employees to vote on whether to adopt an alternative work schedule. Any questions regarding the process for establishing an alternative work schedule for your respective work unit can be directed to your supervisor or the Human Resources Director.

Emergency Dismissal

At times, emergencies such as power failures, road closings, earthquakes, fires, or severe weather may interfere with NCIRE's operations. In such an event, NCIRE may order a temporary shutdown of part or all of its operations and will notify you as soon as possible.

Effort Reporting and Electronic Timesheets

Employees must submit timesheets that document time at work and hours away from work due to illness, holiday, vacation, etc. In addition to time worked, all nonexempt (hourly) employees must record all meal periods. Employees must submit timesheets via our payroll system (or via paper timesheet by approval) on a biweekly basis to their supervisors/managers for review and approval before submission to the Payroll Department for processing.

Timesheets are due at the NCIRE Human Resource Department in Building 210 by 10:00 a.m. on the scheduled Friday preceding the end of the pay period. Failure to submit completed timesheets on time may lead to corrective action. To amend your timecard, contact the Payroll department at payroll@ncire.org no later than one business day after the deadline. Employees must verify the accuracy of the time recorded by signing each timesheet before submission.

No one may record hours worked on another's timesheet. Tampering with another's timesheet is cause for disciplinary action, up to and including possible termination, of both employees. In addition, employees who falsify a timesheet will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Time sheets are available on the company intranet.

WAGE AND HOUR POLICIES

Employment Classifications

Each position at NCIRE is broadly classified by the hours an employee is regularly scheduled to work. Each position falls into one of the following categories and will also determine eligibility for certain employee benefits.

Primary Categories

- **Full-time:** employees who are regularly scheduled to work at least 30 hours per week.
- **Part-time:** employees who are regularly scheduled to work less than 30 hours per week.
- **Intermittent:** employees who work on sporadic work assignments and do not maintain a regular work schedule (i.e., work as needed).
- **Temporary:** employees who are hired on a temporary, short-term or project basis. Appointments are limited – generally not to exceed six (6) months.

Other Categories

- **Outsourced Workers:** Non-employees who provide services pursuant to a contract with specific parameters. Outsourced workers include temporary agency employees, vendors, independent contractors, or consultants.

Outsourced workers are not considered NCIRE employees and therefore receive no employee benefits, unless required by law.

Exempt v. Nonexempt

At the time of hire, employees will be informed of their status as Exempt or Nonexempt employees:

- **Exempt:** employees who are exempt from wage and hour laws.
- **Nonexempt:** employees who are eligible to be paid for overtime work and are entitled to meal and rest breaks, in accordance with the provisions of applicable wage and hour laws.

Meal Periods

Nonexempt employees who work in excess of five (5) hours in a workday are provided with an unpaid, uninterrupted, duty-free meal period. Meal periods are a minimum of thirty (30) consecutive minutes, but generally no longer than one (1) hour in duration, to be taken starting no later than the end of the fifth hour of work.

A second unpaid, uninterrupted, duty-free meal period of not less than thirty (30) minutes is provided when working more than ten (10) hours but not more than twelve (12) hours, starting no later than before the end of the tenth hour of work. The chart below helps break down this meal break policy:

NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED	NUMBER OF AUTHORIZED MEAL PERIODS
5-10 Hours	1
More than 10 Hours	2 (two meal periods may not be combined)

Employees are entitled, encouraged, and expected to take all meal periods provided under this policy and not waived. During meal periods, NCIRE will relieve employees of all duty and will not exercise control over employees' activities. Employees are free to spend their meal period time as they choose (consistent with any other NCIRE policies that may apply during off-duty time) and are free to leave the worksite. No supervisor or manager may impede or discourage employees from taking meal periods provided under this policy.

Employees are to immediately notify their supervisor if they believe that they are prevented by the nature of their work from taking a timely, and/or complete, and uninterrupted meal period. Employees are prohibited from working "off the clock", including during their meal period. No supervisor may require nonexempt employees to work when they are not clocked in.

Waiver

If an employee does not work more than six (6) hours on a given workday, the meal period may be waived by mutual consent of the employee and his or her supervisor, by signing an Agreement to Waive Meal Period form.

An employee who works more than ten (10) hours, but less than twelve (12) hours may waive their second meal period by mutual consent of the employee and supervisor if the first meal period has not been waived. Any such waiver must be in writing. Employees working more than twelve (12) hours are not permitted to waive the second meal period.

Rest Periods

NCIRE authorizes and permits nonexempt employees working at least three and one-half hours in a day to take an uninterrupted, off-duty, paid rest period for fifteen (15) consecutive minutes for every four hours worked or major fraction thereof. Employees who work more than six (6) hours in a day may take a second rest period. Employees who work more than ten (10) hours in a day may take a third rest period. Employees should take their rest periods in the middle of

each work period to the extent it is practical to do so and not combine them with meal periods or skip them to leave work early or arrive late. The chart below helps break down this rest break policy:

NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED	NUMBER OF AUTHORIZED 15 MINUTE REST PERIODS
Less than 3.5 hours	0
3.5-6 Hours	1
6-10 Hours	2
10-14 Hours	3
14-18 Hours	4

During rest periods, NCIRE will relieve employees of all duty and will not exercise control over employees' activities. Employees are free to spend their rest-period time as they choose (consistent with any other NCIRE policies that may apply during off-duty time) and are free to leave the worksite.

If an hourly employee is unable to take any rest break as authorized and permitted under this policy, they are required to immediately – i.e., before the end of their shift – inform their supervisor or manager.

Overtime

Nonexempt employees will receive overtime pay as follows:

Overtime received at....	For all hours worked....
Time and a half (1½x)	- Over 8 hours in a day - Over 40 hours in a workweek - Up to 8 hours on the 7th <u>consecutive</u> <u>workday</u>
Double time (2x)	- Over 12 hours in a workday - All hours in excess of 8 hours on the 7th <u>consecutive workday</u>

Employees are sometimes asked to work additional time to complete rush work or to meet operational needs and emergencies. Therefore, employees' cooperation in performing overtime work is expected. However, overtime may not be worked without advance approval by a supervisor, except in emergency situations. Any overtime hours will be paid at the overtime rate, but the repeated failure to obtain prior management authorization for overtime hours may result in discipline. In addition, NCIRE does not allow nonexempt employees to work "off the clock."

As required by law, overtime pay is based on actual hours worked. Therefore, time off for meals (other than paid meal periods), time spent commuting to and from the initial site of work,

approved paid absences (i.e., time off for sick leave, vacation leave, etc.), or any holiday or leave of absence will not be considered time worked for the purpose of overtime pay calculations.

Making up Time Taken off for Personal Reasons

Employees may be permitted to make up work time that would be lost as a result of a personal obligation of the employee, so long as the work is performed in the same work week in which the work time was lost. NCIRE has full discretion to grant or deny any request to make up work time.

Make-up work time will not be counted toward computing the total number of hours worked in a day for purposes of overtime requirements, except for hours more than eleven (11) hours of work in one day or forty (40) hours of work in one workweek.

A separate Request For Makeup Work Time Form must be signed by both the employee and approved by his or her supervisor before any make-up work is performed.

Employees who know in advance that they will be requesting makeup time for a personal obligation that will recur at a fixed time over successive weeks may request to make up work time for up to four (4) weeks in advance; provided however, that the makeup work must be performed in the same week that the work time was lost.

TIME OFF AND LEAVES OF ABSENCES

Holidays

NCIRE observes the following federal holidays:

- New Year's Day (January 1)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (third Monday in January)
- Presidents' Day (third Monday in February)
- Memorial Day (last Monday in May)
- Juneteenth (June 19)
- Independence Day (July 4)
- Labor Day (first Monday in September)
- Indigenous Peoples' Day (second Monday in October)
- Veterans Day (November 11)
- Thanksgiving (fourth Thursday in November)
- Christmas Day (December 25)
- Two Floating Holiday per year (does not accrue from year to year)

A schedule of NCIRE holidays will be published and distributed in January of each year. Temporary and Intermittent employees will not be paid for these holidays.

Unless otherwise provided in this policy, all full-time and part-time employees will receive time off with pay at their normal base rate for each NCIRE-observed holiday.

Nonexempt employees who are **required by their supervisor** to work on a holiday will be paid at 1 1/2 times their normal base rate for all hours worked in addition to the holiday pay, or

double time (2x) for work in excess of twelve (12) hours on the holiday day or after eight (8) hours on the seventh (7th) consecutive work day in a work week. Hourly employees may not work on a holiday without their supervisor expressly requesting them to do so. Exempt employees who work on a holiday will not receive additional pay.

Employees do not earn paid holiday time off while they are on any type of unpaid leave of absence or unauthorized absence on the day preceding or following a paid holiday. However, if a recognized holiday occurs during an eligible employee's vacation, or during the paid portion of an approved leave of absence, the employee will receive holiday pay instead of having to exhaust their accrued vacation time off.

Holidays falling on Saturdays will normally be observed on the preceding Friday. Holidays falling on Sundays will normally be observed on the following Monday. Holidays that occur during an eligible employee's vacation will not be counted as vacation days taken.

Presidential Closing of Agencies

Executive Orders are issued occasionally closing federal departments or agencies for part or all of a workday. Employees may be excused from duty during such periods unless there is a pressing need as determined by their supervisor. NCIRE's policy will be to follow the VA's directive when such orders are announced and will advise staff in advance. In the event any Executive Orders affect operations in other ways, the Human Resources Department will notify all employees.

Vacation

Eligibility For Paid Vacation Time Off

NCIRE provides paid vacation time off to be used for rest, relaxation, and personal pursuits. Full-time and part-time employees are eligible to accrue paid vacation time off at the commencement of their employment. Temporary and Intermittent assignment employees do not accrue vacation and are not entitled to time off with pay.

Vacation Accrual Rate

Full-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work 40 hours a week will accrue vacation time as follows:

Years of NCIRE Service	Accrual Rate (per pay period)	Hours Accrued Per Pay Period (based on 40 hours worked per workweek)	Annual Maximum Accrual	Maximum Banked Hours
Less than 3	5.385%	4.3 hours	112 hours	240 hours
3 to 15	8.077%	6.46 hours	168 hours	252 hours
15 or more	10.385%	8.30 hours	216 hours	324 hours

Full-time employees who are regularly scheduled to work less than 40 hours per workweek and part-time employees will accrue vacation time on a prorated basis.

Accrued vacation time off can be carried forward from year to year, up to a maximum total accrual. Employees who reach the maximum accrual will not earn additional vacation time off until vacation time is taken and the balance is reduced below the maximum accrual.

Employees who are on leave of absence regardless of the length of their employment cannot accrue any paid vacation time off. When employees are out on disability leave, vacation time will not accrue during any pay period in which they work less than at least one (1) full day of work, other than during periods in which they are using sick leave or vacation time. In addition, employees who voluntarily resign in good standing and are subsequently rehired within three (3) months from their last day of employment will be restored to their appropriate vacation accrual rate in effect at the time of termination.

Upon separation from employment, NCIRE will pay employees any accrued but unused vacation at the employee's final rate of pay.

Vacation Scheduling

Employees must provide as much advance notice as possible of their planned vacation time off and obtain advance approval by their supervisor or manager. NCIRE's approval of employees' requests for vacation time off will be subject to the discretion of management and will be based on a number of factors, including NCIRE's operational and staffing requirements. Employees should submit a Leave Request Form to NCIRE along with the time sheet.

Vacation time must be taken in increments of not less than thirty (30) minutes and employees may not borrow against unearned vacation time. In addition, NCIRE does not permit salary advances or loans against accrued vacation time. Upon termination of employment, employees will be paid for any unused accrued vacation time at their regular base hourly rate.

Sick Leave

In order to help prevent loss of earnings that may be caused by absences due to illness or injury, NCIRE provides paid sick leave for all employees in accordance with California law and applicable local ordinances, such as the San Francisco Paid Sick Leave Ordinance (for any employees that work in San Francisco), to the extent required by law. Paid sick leave is a form of income protection and is not intended to provide additional time off for reasons unrelated to injury or illness. Acceptable attendance is unrelated to and determined independent of an employee's use of paid sick leave. Intermittent or part-time employees may use paid sick leave when scheduled to work and were unable to due to illness or kin care. Sick leave may not be used by intermittent/temporary employees to supplement income when one was not scheduled to work.

Eligibility and Accrual

All employees are eligible to accrue sick leave. Eligible employees begin accruing sick leave at the commencement of their employment.

Employees accrue sick leave at the following rates:

Employment Classification	Accrual Rate (<i>per pay period</i>)	Maximum Days Earned Per Year	Maximum Banked Hours
Full-time (based on a 40 hour workweek)	5% of total hours worked per pay period	13 days	480
Part-time Regular	5% of total hours worked per pay period	Varies by work schedule	480
Part-time Temporary/ Intermittent	1 hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked	72 hours	480

Full-time employees regularly scheduled to work less than 40 hours per workweek, and part-time regular employees will accrue sick leave on a prorated basis.

Part Time Temporary and Intermittent employees are eligible to earn one (1) hour of sick leave for every 30 hours worked. For temporary and intermittent employees, there is a ninety (90) day waiting period before employees can begin using their paid sick leave. Sick hours will be capped at 72 hours per year.

Employees who are on an unpaid leave of absence, regardless of the length of their employment, cannot accrue any sick leave. In addition, employees do not earn sick leave for overtime premium pay.

Furthermore, employees will not be paid for unused sick days at the end of each year but are allowed to carry over any unused sick days from one year to the next with a maximum total accrual of 480 hours. Employees who reach the maximum sick time accrual rate will stop earning additional sick time. Sick leave accruals will begin again after the employee has taken sick leave and his or her accrued hours have dropped below the maximum. Upon termination of employment, employees will not be paid for any unused accrued sick time.

Reasons for Use of Sick Leave

Sick leave is not for “personal” absences. Paid sick leave may be used for any of the following reasons:

- The diagnosis, care, or treatment of an existing health condition of, or preventive care for the employee or the employee’s family member as defined below, including mental health care services; or
- If the employee is a victim of crime or abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, to: (1) obtain or attempt to obtain any relief to help ensure the health, safety, or welfare of the employee or the employee's child, such as a temporary restraining order, restraining order, or other injunctive relief; (2) seek medical attention; (3) obtain services from a shelter, program, rape crisis center, or victim services organization or agency; (4) obtain psychological counseling or mental health services; or (5) participate in safety planning or take other actions to increase safety from future incidents; or
- The employee attending judicial proceedings related to a crime that is a serious or violent felony or a felony involving theft or embezzlement, when the employee

is a victim of that crime or an immediate family member, registered domestic partner, or child of a registered domestic partner of a victim of that crime

“Family members” include: spouses; registered domestic partners; parent-in-law (through spouse or domestic partner); grandparents; grandchildren; siblings; children (biological, adopted, foster, step, legal ward, or a child to whom the employee stands in loco parentis); and, parents (biological, adopted, foster, step, legal guardian, or a person who was in loco parentis when the employee was a minor).. If an employee has no spouse or registered domestic partner, the employee may designate one person for whom he or she may use paid sick leave to provide aid or care. This designation must be on file with NCIRE before the employee may use paid sick leave for this purpose.

Use of Accrued Sick Leave

Accrued sick time must be taken in increments of not less than thirty (30) minutes, and employees may not use more sick time than has been accrued. In addition, no employee will receive pay in lieu of sick leave under any circumstances, and employees will not be paid for any accrued but unused sick leave upon termination of employment.

Employee Notice & Routine Appointments

If leave is foreseeable, employees must provide their supervisor with reasonable advance notice.. If the need for leave is not foreseeable, employees must provide notice as soon as practical. If their supervisor is not available, employees must leave a voicemail message for their supervisor.

Employees are encouraged to schedule routine appointments outside of regular working hours. Employees may use paid sick leave for medical and dental appointments that must be scheduled during working hours. Employees must request and have their supervisor approve sick leave for routine medical, dental, or optical appointments for themselves or a family member in advance. Report time off for any such appointments on timesheets.

If an employee is absent for more than three (3) consecutive work days (or five (5) days during a public health emergency designated by federal, state or local public health authorities), a health care provider’s verification may be required to verify the illness or injury and its beginning and expected ending dates, and to verify that the employee is well enough to return to work, as permitted by law.

Employment Separation and Rehire

Upon separation from employment, paid sick leave not used before the last day of employment is forfeited and is not paid out.

If an employee is rehired within one year of the date of separation, any paid sick leave that was forfeited upon separation will be reinstated and available for the employee to use.

Bereavement and Emergency Leave

Employees suffering the misfortune of a death or serious accident of an immediate family member may be granted up to five (5) days off with pay. If additional time off is necessary,

employees may request use of accrued vacation time off. Any additional unpaid time will be granted at the sole discretion of NCIRE.

“Immediate family member” is defined as:

- spouse, domestic partner and parents thereof;
- children, including adopted children, domestic partner’s children, step and foster children; and
- parents, legal guardians, grandparents, grandchildren, mother-, father-, sister-, brother-, son- or daughter-in-law, siblings and spouses thereof;
- aunt, uncle, niece, nephew;
- members of the employee's immediate household

Family Care/Medical Leave

NCIRE provides unpaid leaves of absence for eligible employees under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and California Family Rights Act (CFRA). Under either the FMLA or CFRA, eligible employees may receive up to 12 workweeks of unpaid leave during an employer-specified 12-month period.

CFRA leave is generally more expansive than FMLA. While FMLA and CFRA may overlap, leave that qualifies under one statute may not qualify under the other. Employees with questions about eligibility may contact HR.

Employees may also be eligible to use accrued and “available” sick leave for certain purposes as specified in the paid sick leave law. Employees can discuss this option and any leave related questions with HR.

Eligibility Under the CFRA

To be eligible for CFRA Leave, an employee must have:

- Worked for NCIRE for at least 12 months before the date the leave is to start;
- Worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12 months immediately before the start of the leave

CFRA Qualifying Events or Reasons for Leave

Eligible employees may take a Family Care/Medical Leave for the following reasons:

- The birth, adoption, or foster placement of the employee's child
- To care for a child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, or domestic partner or “designated person” (*defined as an individual who is related by blood to the employee or whose association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship*) who has a serious health condition
- To care for an employee's own serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee's position, except for leave taken for disability on account of pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions
- A qualifying exigency related to the covered active duty or call to covered active duty of an employee's spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent in the Armed Forces of the United States

Amount of Leave Under the CFRA

Eligible employees may take up to a total of twelve (12) workweeks of unpaid CFRA leave during any 12-month period.

If NCIRE employs both parents and both parents are eligible for CFRA because of their child's birth, adoption, or foster care placement, each parent may take up to 12 workweeks in the one-year period after the child's birth, adoption, or foster care placement.

To determine how much CFRA leave an employee has used in a 12-month period, NCIRE looks back at the 12 months preceding each leave request.

CFRA leave may be taken intermittently (in separate blocks of time due to the employee's own or a family member's health condition) or on a reduced leave schedule (reducing the usual number of hours you work per workweek or workday) if medically necessary.

In addition, the minimum duration of leave for the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of an employee's child is two (2) weeks. However, NCIRE shall grant a request for leave of less than two (2) weeks duration on two (2) occasions only. In addition, the employee must conclude the leave within one (1) year following the child's birth or placement.

If leave is for a qualifying reason under CFRA and FMLA, the 12-month period under CFRA runs concurrently with the 12-month period under FMLA.

Serious Health Condition

A serious health condition is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical facility or continuing treatment by a healthcare provider.

Subject to certain conditions, the continuing treatment requirement may be met by a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days combined with at least two visits to a health care provider or one visit and a regimen of continuing treatment, or incapacity due to pregnancy or a chronic condition. Other conditions may meet the definition of continuing treatment.

Medical Certification

NCIRE may request medical certification from a health care provider supporting the need for leave. For military caregiver leave, the employee must confirm a family relationship to the seriously ill or injured service member. Employees generally must provide the required certification within fifteen (15) calendar days after NCIRE requests certification.

The certification must state:

- whether the qualified person is suffering from a serious health condition (without disclosing the condition);
- the date, if known, of the onset of the serious health condition; and
- the probable duration of the condition.

If the employee suffers from a serious health condition, the certification must also include a statement that due to the condition, the employee is unable to work at all or is unable to perform one of more of the essential functions of the position. If a qualified family member suffers from the serious health condition, the certification must include an estimate of the time period the health care provider believes the employee needs to care for the family member, and a statement that the condition warrants the participation of the employee to provide care during a period of treatment or supervision of the family member.

Failure to provide the requested medical certification in a timely manner may delay leave approval until it is provided. If NCIRE never receives certification, the leave may not be considered family and medical leave. Under certain circumstances and as permitted by law, NCIRE may, at its expense, require a second and third medical examination of the employee. NCIRE may also require periodic medical recertification during the leave, and an employee must present a fitness-for-duty certification upon return to work following leave for their own serious health condition.

Notice of Leave

Employees must notify NCIRE of their request for family care, medical, military exigency, or military caregiver leave as soon as they are aware of the need for such leave. If the need for leave is foreseeable, employees must give NCIRE at least thirty (30) calendar days' prior written notice. Where the need for leave is not foreseeable, employees are expected to notify NCIRE in writing as soon as practical, generally within 1 to 2 business days of learning of the need for leave, depending on the circumstances.

An employee should submit a written request for leave that includes the anticipated date(s) and duration of the requested leave. Employees are required to make a reasonable effort to schedule medical treatment so as not to disrupt the NCIRE's operations, subject to the approval of their health care provider, or the health care provider of their family member, as appropriate.

If an employee fails to provide the required 30-day advance notice for foreseeable events without a reasonable excuse for the delay, NCIRE reserves the right to delay the leave until at least 30 days after the employee provides notice of the need for family care or medical leave.

Leave Is Unpaid

An employee who takes a leave due to their own serious health condition may apply accrued sick leave and accrued vacation time.

An employee who takes leave for the adoption or placement of a child for foster care, or to care for a qualified family member with a serious health condition, may apply all accrued sick and vacation time at the beginning of the leave period.

Any employee receiving State Disability Insurance (SDI), Paid Family Leave (PFL), or Workers' Compensation benefits during the Family Care/Medical Leave must coordinate their company time off with state benefits. An employee may not receive more than 100% of his or her salary from a combination of paid time off, disability or workers' compensation benefits. In addition, use of accrued sick or vacation time and receipt of SDI or PFL benefits will not extend the length of any leave taken under this section. Employees will not accrue paid time off benefits (e.g., sick, vacation, or holiday) while on unpaid leave.

Medical Benefits

During an approved CFRA leave, NCIRE will maintain an employee's group health benefits as if the employee had continued to be actively employed, up to a total of twelve (12) weeks in a 12-month period. If an employee takes more than twelve (12) weeks of approved leave in a 12-month period, then the employee may elect to continue coverage at the employee's sole expense for the remainder of the leave.

If paid leave is substituted for unpaid CFRA leave, NCIRE will deduct the employee's portion of the health plan premium as a regular payroll deduction. If the leave is unpaid, an employee must pay his/her portion of the premium during the leave. NCIRE may recover health insurance premiums paid for maintaining the employee's group health insurance coverage if the employee:

- does not return to work at the end of the leave period; or
- works less than 30 days after returning from leave and if the employee's failure to return is caused by a reason other than a serious health condition or other circumstances beyond the employee's control.

Return to Work Following Leave

Employees who return to work before the end of their planned leave period should provide advance notice of their intended return date to allow management sufficient time to adjust employees' work assignments. I

. If leave is taken because of an employee's own serious health condition, then the employee must provide medical certification that he or she is fit to resume work. NCIRE may delay restoring the employee to employment or terminate the employee without such certification.

Consistent with applicable law, except for limited circumstances, employees who return from an approved Family Care/Medical Leave will be reinstated to the same or equivalent position.

Pregnancy and Childbirth Related Disability Leaves and Accommodations

Any female or transgender employee disabled due to pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition is eligible to take an unpaid leave of absence of up to four (4) months for the period of such disability regardless of her scheduled hours worked or length of service with NCIRE.

Length of Leave

A pregnancy or childbirth disability leave of absence is for the period during which the employee is actually disabled due to pregnancy, childbirth, or a related medical condition, up to four (4) months per pregnancy. This would cover all time off needed for health care provider appointments, prenatal care, morning sickness, doctor-ordered bed rest, childbirth, and recovery from childbirth.

When medically required, an employee may take Pregnancy Disability Leave (PDL) intermittently or on a reduced work schedule.

When an employee is no longer deemed disabled due to pregnancy, the employee may be eligible to take twelve (12) weeks of time off to bond with her newborn baby.

Please refer to the above section on Family Care/Medical Leave for eligibility and applicable rules and conditions.

Request for Transfer or Accommodation

A pregnant employee may be entitled to transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous position for the duration of her pregnancy upon request, where such transfer can be reasonably accommodated.

An employee also may be entitled to reasonable accommodation for conditions related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions upon request, where such reasonable accommodation would not cause an undue hardship to NCIRE. A request for reasonable accommodation or transfer must be supported by the written certification of the employee's health care provider that such an accommodation or transfer is medically advisable.

Leave is Unpaid

Employees may use sick leave and may elect to use any accrued vacation time while on PDL. In addition, an employee may be eligible for State Disability Insurance (SDI) benefits during the leave, although she may not receive more than 100% of her salary from a combination of paid time off and state disability benefits. Substituting paid time for unpaid leave time and/or receiving disability benefits does not extend the maximum four-month PDL period.

Medical Benefits

During an approved PDL, NCIRE will maintain an employee's group health benefits under the same conditions as if she had continued to be actively employed for up to a maximum of four months regardless of eligibility for FMLA. If the employee is not eligible for FMLA coverage after PDL ends, she will receive notification of continuing medical benefits through COBRA during the leave.

Notice of Leave

Employees must notify NCIRE of their PDL request as soon as they become aware of the need for such leave. For foreseeable PDL, the employee must provide NCIRE with 30 calendar days' advance notice of the need for leave. For events that are unforeseeable 30 days in advance, the employee must notify NCIRE as soon as is practical and generally must comply with NCIRE'S normal call-in or notice procedures. If the leave is requested in connection with planned, non-emergency medical treatment, the employee must attempt to schedule the treatment to avoid unduly disrupting NCIRE operations and may be asked to reschedule the treatment to minimize disruption of NCIRE'S business.

When possible, an employee should submit a written Request for Family Care/Medical Leave of Absence. A leave request must be supported by a medical certification from a health care provider. Employees generally must provide the required certification within 15 calendar days after NCIRE requests these documents. For foreseeable leaves, employees should make a reasonable effort to schedule medical treatment to avoid disrupting NCIRE operations when

possible, subject to approval by their health care provider, or the health care provider of their family member, as appropriate. In addition, NCIRE requests that employees submit the appropriate documentation before the leave start date. If this is not possible, employees must provide it generally within 15 calendar days. Please refer to the above section on Family Care/Medical Leave for eligibility and applicable rules and conditions.

Return from Leave

Upon return from an approved PDL, an employee will be reinstated to the same or comparable position, if available, subject to any exceptions provided by law. Any right to reinstatement terminates if an employee fails to return to work at the end of an approved leave, in accordance with applicable laws. To return from a PDL, an employee must provide the Human Resource Department with a certification from her health care provider that she can resume work.

Other Disability Leaves

Other Disability Leaves

Employees may take a disability leave of absence if necessary to reasonably accommodate a workplace injury or a disability as required by law. The duration of such leaves shall be consistent with applicable law, but in no event shall the leave extend past the date when an employee becomes capable of performing the essential functions of his or her position, with or without reasonable accommodation. An employee taking a disability leave may elect to apply accrued sick time for such leaves.

Medical certification may be required to initiate and continue a disability leave of absence. Upon return from a disability leave, the employee must submit medical certification that he or she is able to return to work and capable of performing the essential functions of the job, with or without restrictions. Any restrictions must be clearly stated in the medical certification.

Accrued sick time and accrued vacation time may be used to supplement any payments that an employee is eligible to receive from state disability or workers' compensation insurance. An employee may not receive more than an amount equal to 100% of his or her normal weekly earnings from a combination of paid time off, disability or workers' compensation benefits. Otherwise, disability leaves under this section will be unpaid unless an employee qualifies for Long-Term Disability benefits.

Other Legally Required Leaves of Absences

Employees will be granted a leave of absence that is required by law for the purpose of fulfilling any required legal, civic, military or parental obligation (e.g., jury duty, appearance as a witness in a legal proceeding, military reserve duty, voting, school activities, etc.). These policies will be interpreted and applied in accordance with applicable federal, state and local laws, and to the extent that this policy may conflict with those laws, they are controlling over these policies.

Military Leave

Employees who must be absent from work for military service, including fitness for duty examinations, training, or active duty, will be granted a leave of absence.

Uniformed services refer to the U.S. Armed Services including:

- Army National Guard and Air National Guard (when engaged in active duty for training, inactive duty training, or full-time National Guard duty);
- the Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service;
- the Reserves of the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard; and
- any other category of persons designated by the President in time of war or emergency.

Employees must notify their immediate supervisor as soon as they know the required dates of service (unless such notice is precluded by military necessity or is otherwise impossible or unreasonable). Notice can be in the form of military orders, training notices, or induction information. Subject to certain exceptions, the cumulative length of an employee's military leave of absence from work may not exceed five (5) years.

Exempt employees who work any part of a workweek in which they take such a leave will be paid for that workweek only. Otherwise, leaves taken for these purposes will be unpaid.

However, employees may elect to substitute accrued vacation time to receive pay for leaves taken for these purposes. Vacation and sick-leave benefits do not accrue during any unpaid period of military leave.

Employees who are on military leave for less than 31 days are entitled to continue their medical coverage on the same terms as he or she received prior to commencing military leave. They must continue to pay their portion of the medical premium. For service beyond 30 days, the employee may continue health benefits under applicable federal and state law.

Upon return from an excused military leave, the employee will be reinstated to his or her former position, or another position, to the extent required by applicable law. To be eligible to return to work, employees must:

- Give notice prior to taking military leave;
- Be released from military service under "honorable discharge" and provide a certificate of satisfactory completion of service;
- Submit an application for reemployment based on particular length of leave; and
- Report to work in a timely manner in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

Military Leave for Spouses and Registered Domestic Partners

Employees who work twenty (20) hours or more hours a week and who have a spouse or registered domestic partner engaged in active military duty may take up to ten (10) days of unpaid leave during their spouses' or registered domestic partners' leave from deployment in a time of military conflict.

Eligible employees must provide NCIRE with notice of their intention to take leave within two business days of receiving official notice that their spouse or registered domestic partner will be on leave from deployment; and submit proper documentation certifying their spouse or registered domestic partner's leave from deployment.

Employees may elect to use their accrued vacation time during the leave. If the employee has no accrued vacation, the employee must request time off without pay. Employees must submit

the official government documentation along with the Military Spouse Leave Request Form to the HR department after speaking to their manager.

Voting Time Off

Employees may take up to two (2) hours of paid leave to vote in an election if they do not have sufficient time outside working hours to vote. Employees must give their immediate supervisor at least two (2) 'days' advance notice if they need time off to vote. The time off must be at the beginning or end of an employee's workday, whichever allows the least time off from work, unless otherwise mutually agreed.

Leave for School/Day Care Visits

Employees who are the parent, grandparent, guardian, stepparents, foster parents, and person who stands *in loco parentis* to a child enrolled in kindergarten through grade 12 or attending a licensed child care provider, will be granted time off without pay for up to forty (40) hours per calendar year, but no more than eight (8) hours in any calendar month, to:

- participate in the activities of the schools or licensed childcare provider attended by their children;
- to find, enroll or re-enroll a child in school or with a childcare provider;
- to address a childcare provider emergency or a school emergency;
- to attend a school disciplinary conference upon request of the school principal/administrator may do so upon reasonable advance notice.

Employees requesting time off for this purpose must provide the Human Resources Director with reasonable notice of the planned absence. In addition, employees must substitute accrued vacation time to receive pay for leaves taken for these purposes. Otherwise, leaves taken for these purposes will be unpaid. NCIRE reserves the right to request that the employee furnish written verification from the school or childcare provider as proof that the employee participated in school or daycare activities or conference on the specific date and at a particular time. Failure to provide written verification may be grounds for disciplinary action.

Jury Duty and Court Appearances

Employees will be granted time off to:

- 1) to serve on a jury or grand jury; or
- 2) to appear as a witness in court or other judicial proceeding to comply with a subpoena or court order, including victims of crimes.

Employees must provide reasonable notice of the need for leave taken under this section. NCIRE provides five days of paid jury duty leave. Beyond five days, the employee must use their own accrued vacation time to cover time missed from work.

Unless an emergency or unscheduled court appearance is required, in which case, they must provide the Director of Human Resources with written evidence from the court or prosecuting attorney within fifteen (15) days of the absence that they have appeared in court.

Employees are provided with up to five (5) days of paid leave for jury duty or appearing as a witness in any formal legal proceeding. Any jury or witness duty that extends beyond five business days per year will be unpaid.

Exempt employees who work any part of a workweek in which they take such a leave will be paid for that workweek only. Employees may elect to substitute accrued vacation time to receive pay for leaves that extend beyond five (5) days. Employees are expected to return to work each day or portion of the day that they are not selected for jury duty or called as a witness in a legal proceeding.

Crime Victims

We will not discriminate or retaliate against you if you are a victim of a qualifying act of violence and are taking time off to obtain or attempt to obtain relief, including, but not limited to: seeking a temporary restraining order, restraining order, or other injunctive relief to help ensure the health, safety or welfare of you or your child.

A "qualifying act of violence" means any of the following, regardless of whether anyone is arrested for, prosecuted for, or convicted of committing any crime: domestic violence; sexual assault; stalking; and an act, conduct, or pattern that includes (i) an individual causing injury or death to another; (2) an individual exhibiting, drawing, brandishing, or using a firearm or other dangerous weapon with respect to another; or (iii) an individual using or making a reasonably perceived or actual threat of use of force against another to cause physical injury or death.

You may request a reasonable accommodation to make sure you are safe at work. To facilitate your request, you will need to provide a signed statement certifying that your request is for a proper purpose. We will also need proof of your status as a qualifying act of violence victim or a qualifying family member's status.

"Family member" is defined as: a child, parent, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, spouse, domestic partner, or designated person. "Designated Person" is defined as any individual related by blood or whose association with the employee is equivalent to a family relationship. You are limited to one designated person per 12-month period.]

If you have a TRO (Temporary Restraining Order) against another individual, you should inform your Supervisor or Human Resources immediately.

Additional Covered Time Off

Additionally, we will not discriminate or retaliate against an employee who is (or who has a family member who is) a victim of a qualifying act of violence for taking time off from work for any of the purposes below.

Time off is protected for the following purposes when related to a qualifying act of violence:

- obtaining or attempting to obtain relief (e.g., restraining order, injunctive relief etc.);
- seeking or obtaining medical attention or to recover from injuries;
- seeking or obtaining services from a domestic violence shelter, rape crisis center, or similar services;
- seeking or obtaining psychological counseling or other mental health services;
- participating in safety planning;
- relocating or securing a new residence, including temporary or permanent housing or enrolling children in a new school;

- providing care to a family member who is recovering from injuries;
- seeking or obtaining civil or criminal legal services;
- preparing for, participating in, or attending any civil, administrative, or criminal legal proceeding;
- seeking, obtaining, or providing childcare or care to a care-dependent adult if necessary to ensure the safety of the child or dependent adult.

Time off is limited as follows:

- The total combined leave for any above purpose or combination thereof is limited to 12 weeks.
- Time off for the purpose of relocation, securing housing, enrollment etc., is limited to 5 days when leave is related to an employee's family member who is a victim only, unless the victim is deceased as a result of the qualifying act of violence, in which case time off is limited to 12 weeks.
- When leave is related to an employee's family member who is a victim only, time off is limited to 10 days, unless the victim is deceased as a result of the qualifying act of violence, in which case time off is limited to 12 weeks.

Leave Rights

Leave time is unpaid, but you may use any available paid time off for your absence, including paid sick leave, if you wish to be compensated during your leave.

When applicable, leave runs concurrently with, and is limited to leave time provided under the California Family Rights Act (CFRA), or the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

Notice Requirements

Please provide us with reasonable advance notice before you take time off. If, however, you are unable to provide advance notice, please provide proof explaining the reason for your absence within a reasonable time. Proof can include, but is not limited to: a police report, court order, medical documentation, victim advocate documentation, or any other form of documentation reasonably verifying that the qualifying act of violence occurred, including a written statement signed by the employee. We will maintain your confidentiality of requesting crime victims leave to the extent possible.

Volunteer Firefighter Leave or Other Emergency Rescue Personnel Leave

Employees may also take time off to perform emergency duty as a volunteer firefighter, a reserve peace officer, or emergency rescue personnel. NCIRE requires documentation from the Fire Chief (or proper authority) that supports the emergency duty. Exempt employees who work any part of a workweek in which they take such a leave will be paid for that workweek only. Otherwise, leaves taken for these purposes will be unpaid. However, employees may elect to substitute accrued vacation time to receive pay for leaves taken for these purposes.

Alcohol and Drug Rehabilitation Leave

NCIRE will attempt to reasonably accommodate employees who voluntarily enter into a drug or alcohol rehabilitation program, provided that it does not impose an undue hardship on NCIRE. Employees may request an unpaid leave of absence for that purpose through the Human Resources Department. If approved, employees may apply accrued vacation time to receive pay during such leave; otherwise, such leaves are unpaid.

Employees who, because of their current use of alcohol or drugs, are unable to perform their job or who cannot perform their duties in a manner without endangering their health or safety of others may not be granted a leave or any other form of accommodation.

Further, NCIRE's support for treatment and rehabilitation does not obligate NCIRE to employ any person who violated NCIRE's Drug and Alcohol Free Workplace policy or whose job performance is impaired because of substance abuse. NCIRE is not obligated to re-employ any person who has participated in treatment or rehabilitation if that person's job performance remains impaired as a result of dependency.

California Organ and Bone Marrow Donor Leave

NCIRE will grant thirty (30) business days of paid leave and thirty (30) business days of unpaid leave within a one-year period to employees who are organ donors. NCIRE will also grant five (5) business days of paid leave within a one-year period to employees who donate bone marrow.

Employees will be required to use up to two weeks of either accrued sick or vacation time for organ donation leave and five days of accrued sick leave for bone marrow leave. NCIRE will maintain an employee's group health benefits as if the employee had continued to be actively employed during this leave.

An employee must submit a leave request on the Leave Request Form to their Principal Investigator and inform the Human Resources Department. A leave request must be supported by medical certification from a health care provider and submitted within fifteen (15) calendar days.

Leave taken under this policy will not run concurrently with any leave taken pursuant to the federal Family and Medical Leave Act or the California Family Rights Act.

Upon expiration of a leave of absence authorized by this policy, NCIRE will restore the employee to the position held by the employee when the leave began or to a position with equivalent seniority status, employee benefits, pay, and other terms and conditions of employment. NCIRE may decline to restore an employee for reasons unrelated to the employee's exercise of rights under this policy.

Civil Air Patrol Leave

NCIRE provides at least ten (10) days per calendar year of leave to an employee responding to an emergency operational mission of the California Wing of the Civil Air Patrol. Civil Air Patrol leave for a single emergency operational mission shall not exceed three days, unless an extension of time is granted by the governmental entity that authorized the emergency operational mission, and the extension of the leave is approved by the employer.

An employee shall give the employer as much notice as possible of the intended dates upon which the Civil Air Patrol leave will begin and end.

NCIRE may require certification from the proper Civil Air Patrol authority to verify the eligibility of the employee for the leave requested or taken. If the employee fails to provide the required certification, NCIRE may deny the leave.

Eligible employees are not required to exhaust all accrued vacation leave, personal leave, compensatory leave, sick leave, disability leave, and any other leave that may be available to the employee in order to take Civil Air Patrol leave.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Overview

At NCIRE, we are committed to providing a comprehensive benefits program with the best value to protect you and your family. We understand the challenges you face in successfully managing your work, home and professional commitments and obligations in today's world. We sincerely hope that by offering a broad selection of both employer sponsored and elective benefit options, you will achieve a positive work/life balance that will suit your specific needs. Our Benefits Program reflects our appreciation for you, our employee, and the vital contributions you make; as such, we continue to strive to be competitive in our industry and marketplace.

The terms on which benefits are made available to employees are set forth in the governing plan documents. If a conflict arises between the following descriptions and the terms of the plan documents, the plan documents will control. This handbook is not a plan document and does not create any enforceable rights with respect to benefits or any other terms or conditions of employment. Visit our website for more information about our benefit plans:

<https://www.ncire.org/ncire-human-resources>.

Paid Family Leave (PFL) and Family Temporary Disability Insurance (FTDI)

Paid Family Leave (PFL), also known as Family Temporary Disability Insurance (FTDI) program, is a state-sponsored insurance program within the State Disability Insurance (SDI) program. It allows eligible employees to a partial wage replacement for up to eight (8) weeks in any 12-month period to care for a new child (birth, adoption, or foster care) or a seriously ill or injured family member, which includes a parent, child, spouse, domestic partner, sibling, grandparent, grandchild or parent-in-law..

To qualify for this benefit, NCIRE requires employees to:

- 1) Submit a Leave Request Form to the Human Resources Department with as much advance notice as possible;

Employees may apply for FTDI benefits in the same manner as SDI benefits; however, anyone already receiving SDI, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance or welfare payments cannot also receive FTDI benefits. Employees must complete a claim form and provide medical documentation supporting their need for leave directly to the Employment Development Department (EDD)

As with SDI benefits, FTDI must coordinate with your NCIRE Human Resources Representative, as you may not receive more than 100% of your pay between your FTDI and your NCIRE pay. Coordination of benefits between EDD and NCIRE is required if you choose to supplement your FTDI with your NCIRE accrued time.

There is a 7-day waiting period before receipt of FTDI benefits. Employees may use accrued sick or vacation time before receipt of FTDI benefits. FTDI must be taken concurrently with family care leave and does not entitle an employee to take any additional time off. Receipt of FTDI benefits will not enable employees to extend an authorized leave of absence or guarantee reinstatement upon return from leave, unless otherwise required by law.

Paid Parental Leave

Under the Paid Parental Leave Ordinance, an eligible San Francisco-based employee who receives Paid Family Leave benefits to bond with a newborn, adopted, or foster-placed child may be eligible for eight weeks of Supplemental Compensation.

To be eligible, the employee must:

1. Have been employed by NCIRE for at least 180 days, including part-time and temporary employees;
2. Work at least eight hours per week (and at least 40% of total weekly hours) within San Francisco;
3. Be eligible to receive California Paid Family Leave (PFL) benefits to bond with a new child.

NCIRE will pay Supplemental Compensation equal to the difference between the eligible employee's current normal gross weekly wage and the amount being paid through PFL, subject to a weekly maximum benefit amount, for a period of up to eight weeks.

The California Paid Family Leave program places a cap on the weekly benefit amount. NCIRE's Supplemental Contribution obligation under the ordinance is proportionally capped by reference to the State maximum weekly benefit amount.

To receive Supplemental Compensation, the eligible employee must first file a claim for PFL benefits for new child bonding through the Employment Development Department (EDD). Then the eligible employee must notify NCIRE that they actually receiving PFL benefits by either providing NCIRE a copy of the Notice of Computation of California Paid Family Leave Benefits or authorizing the state to disclose the weekly benefit amount to NCIRE. If the employee does not do so, NCIRE is not required to provide Supplemental Compensation.

If the employee works for more than one employer, the employee must supply NCIRE with a copy of the PPL Form, including Section 4 Multiple Employers. NCIRE has the right to request documentation to verify the wages earned from other employers. If notice is not provided, NCIRE is not required to provide Supplemental Compensation. If notice is provided, Supplemental Compensation is apportioned among employers based on the percentage of the employee's total gross weekly wages received from each employer.

In order to receive Supplemental Compensation, eligible employees must agree in writing to reimburse NCIRE if they voluntarily separate from employment within 90 days of the end of their leave period and NCIRE requests such reimbursement in writing. Failure to sign the San Francisco PPL Form Agreement renders the employee ineligible to receive Supplemental Compensation under the PPLO.

Under the California Paid Family Leave program, the eight-week leave may be taken as eight consecutive weeks, or it may be spread out over up to a 12-month period (referred to as “intermittent leave”).

Short Term Disability Benefits

Employees absent due to disability or a medical condition, including pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, may be eligible for State Disability Insurance (SDI) benefits and payroll integration, a benefit NCIRE provides to regular, full-time employees. If selected, NCIRE will coordinate SDI payments with paid time off.

Long-Term Disability Benefits

NCIRE provides employees with a private long-term disability plan if an employee has a disabling condition for longer than three (3) months. Employees are encouraged to consult the Human Resources Department for literature and qualifying information.

Group Term Life Policy

All regular full-time employees working at least 30 hours per week are eligible to receive Group Term Life Insurance valued at \$50,000.00, which includes an equal amount of Accidental Death & Dismemberment (AD&D) Insurance. Additional optional life insurance is also available at the employee’s own expense.

Employee Assistance Program

NCIRE provides employees with an Employee Assistance Program, a private counseling program designed to help employees cope with and resolve personal issues including:

- stress
- crisis
- eating disorders
- medical problems
- marital and family problems
- emotional problems
- relationship difficulties
- psychiatric disorders
- work related difficulties
- alcohol and drug issues
- smoking
- referral service for childcare, eldercare, pet, legal and financial services.

Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconsideration Act (COBRA)

Consistent with the requirements of federal and state laws, an eligible employee who was enrolled in a group health plan may have a right to choose to continue health benefits coverage on a self-pay basis, due to a reduction of the employee’s hours of employment or the termination of employment (other than due to gross misconduct) for a period of up to 36 months. Dependents of an employee covered by group health plans may have a right to choose continuation coverage on a self-pay basis, for up to 36 months if they lose such coverage under certain circumstances, including the death of the employee, termination of employee’s

employment or reduction of hours of employment, divorce or legal separation or dissolution of domestic partnership, or the employee becomes entitled to Medicare.

Eligible employees and their qualified dependents will have sixty (60) days from the date of their COBRA notification to inform NCIRE or their third party administrator of their election of COBRA coverage. Otherwise, if the eligible employee and/or dependents do not file the COBRA election forms that are provided by NCIRE within this 60-day period, COBRA rights will be forfeited. A notice of COBRA rights and explanation of the qualifications for and length of coverage is available upon request from the Human Resources Department.

Workers Compensation

Employees who are injured while performing their job, regardless of their length of service, are covered by Workers' Compensation insurance, which provides coverage for medical and hospital treatment in addition to payment for loss of earnings that may result from work-related injuries. Employees who experience an occupational injury or illness should immediately seek medical treatment to ensure proper and timely medical care and notify their supervisor or manager as soon as possible.

NCIRE is not liable for the payment of workers' compensation benefits for any injury that arises from an employee's voluntary participation in an off-duty recreational, social, or athletic activity that is not a part of the employee's work-related duties, unless these activities are a required part of the job. Please contact Human Resources for all work-related injuries.

NCIRE will not take any adverse employment action against an employee in retaliation for reporting a workplace injury claim.

Retirement Plans

NCIRE has established a two-part retirement savings plan to provide employees the potential for financial security upon retirement. The plan consists of a defined contribution plan with employer contributions, also known as the Profit Sharing Plan, and an elective 403(b) retirement plan.

Defined Contribution Plan 401(a)

The defined contribution plan allows employees to receive an allocation of NCIRE's contributions in proportion to the employee's base earnings for the tax year. This plan is non-contributory, meaning employees do not contribute to this plan; it is employer funded. The percentage rate is determined each year by the Board of Directors based on NCIRE's prior year's performance. The plan year is a 12-month period beginning on October 1 each year and ending on September 30.

- Contributions for NCIRE project employees are paid from the funding of each Principal Investigator.
- All full-time and part-time employees are eligible for the defined contribution plan upon the completion of two years of service and 1000 hours of service per employment year.
- Loans are not available from the defined contribution plan.

403(b) Plan

NCIRE offers employees the option to participate in a 403(b) tax-deferred retirement savings plan whereby employees can contribute a percentage of their eligible compensation each pay period on a pre-tax basis until the annual maximum ceiling is reached. For participants who are age 50 or older by the end of each calendar year you may contribute an additional amount to your savings plan (please see IRS guidelines for details). If you are age 50 or older by the end of each calendar year, you may contribute an additional amount to your savings plan (please see IRS guidelines for details). NCIRE will match your 403b contribution dollar for dollar (aka 100% match) up to 5%. For example, if you put in 5%, NCIRE will contribute 5%; if you contribute 2%, NCIRE will contribute 2%. If you put in 6%, NCIRE will contribute 5%, because this is our maximum match.

Transit and Parking Benefit Plan

NCIRE offers all regular full-time, part-time, and temporary employees a Qualified Transit and Parking Fringe Benefit plan. The two plans are separate. You may enroll in one plan, both plans, or neither plan.

The transit plan reimburses participants for qualified transportation expenses incurred while taking mass transportation, such as MUNI, BART, or Cal Train, to work.

The parking plan is designed to reimburse participants for employment related parking expenses such as BART or Cal Train parking lot fees or monthly VA parking passes.

Employees will pay for their own qualified transportation expenses through pre-tax payroll deductions. Reimbursements are handled through a third party administrator.

Ergonomics Evaluations

NCIRE is committed to providing a workplace that protects employees from occupational illness and injury caused by computer use or repetitive motion tasks, and we will provide an ergonomics evaluation to any employee who requests one to proactively identify and prevent musculoskeletal conditions.

Employee Referral Program

Many productive hires have resulted from successful employee referrals.. Our employees know our company and culture from the inside and understand that matching the skills and experience required for a position makes for an ideal working environment. We appreciate your trusted recommendations of friends and associates. Therefore, we encourage our employees to refer members of their network for any of our open positions.

Purpose:

The purpose of NCIRE's Referral Program is to partner with our most valuable resource—our employees. This program allows us to share in the success of identifying the right talent for the right job at NCIRE.

Eligibility:

All full-time or part-time regular-status employees are eligible to participate in the program, except for employees within the management hierarchy who oversee the open position, influence hiring decisions, or who may have a conflict of interest.

How the Program Works:

If you know someone who meets the qualifications for an open position and are confident they would be a good addition to NCIRE, please refer them!

The referring employee must be employed by NCIRE or have accepted an offer of employment prior to initiating an employee referral and must inform Human Resources via email of their candidate referral before an offer of employment is extended to the referred candidate.

If your referral is subsequently hired and successfully passes their first 90 days of employment, you will be awarded \$250.00 to thank you for your partnership. If you refer a candidate for a hard to fill position (as determined by HR), or a Veteran, we will double your award to \$500.00 (proof of Veteran status required).

An employee referral award will not be paid for:

- Former or current NCIRE employees who are rehired or hired into a new position.
- Candidates working with an employment agency claiming a fee.
- Temporary positions, including those that transition into full-time positions.

This payment will be issued to you via a separate check or direct deposit and will not be included with your normal payroll deposit. Please contact Human Resources with any questions about this program.

Thank you for making NCIRE a great place to work!

Required Notice



PAY TRANSPARENCY NONDISCRIMINATION PROVISION

The contractor will not discharge or in any other manner discriminate against employees or applicants because they have inquired about, discussed, or disclosed their own pay or the pay of another employee or applicant. However, employees who have access to the compensation information of other employees or applicants as a part of their essential job functions cannot disclose the pay of other employees or applicants to individuals who do not otherwise have access to compensation information, unless the disclosure is (a) in response to a formal complaint or charge, (b) in furtherance of an investigation, proceeding, hearing, or action, including an investigation conducted by the employer, or (c) consistent with the contractor's legal duty to furnish information. 41 CFR 60-1.35(c)

If you believe that you have experienced discrimination contact OFCCP
1.800.397.6251 | TTY 1.877.889.5627 | www.dol.gov/ofccp



200 CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW | WASHINGTON, DC 20210 | tel: 1-800-397-6251 | TTY: 1-877-889-5627 | www.dol.gov/ofccp