



Employee Handbook Insert: Best Practices and Suggested Content

General Guidance

REDF acknowledges that the structure of most employee handbooks is to ensure employment laws and policies are covered and serves to inform employees as well as reduce liability for the social enterprise. These documents, however, can seem wordy, opaque, and daunting to some participant workers. They may include sections that are relevant to permanent staff, but not to participant workers. Therefore, we recommend including an insert or supplement highlighting topics most relevant to participant workers. A Frequently Asked Questions format is one potential way to present the information in a user-friendly format. For information too lengthy, it may be possible to reference for the participant worker where they can find the information (e.g., page numbers in employee handbook) most relevant to them. We strongly encourage writing at an accessible level, use of user-friendly terminology, plenty of white space, and visuals or charts to reduce long uninterrupted text sections.

- This Employee Handbook Insert should include an introduction/welcome tailored specifically to the audience, detailing the contents of the handbook and expectation that the handbook should be read and signed. This section can include the mission and a brief history of the organization and program, though it is important to keep the document short and digestible.
- Roles and contact information for relevant staff members should be included for participant worker use so participant workers know to whom to take what questions or issues.
- The duration of the transitional job should be explicit, along with expectations for graduating into a full-time role externally (or internally if that opportunity exists).

Additionally, we suggest inclusion of the following topics:

Compensation

- Wages/stipend and payroll information, including starting amount, timing of first payment, ongoing payment schedule, and modality.
- Processes for time tracking (timesheets)
- Any clearly defined milestones for wage increases or incentives. If you're committed to wage bumps but the amount varies, detail the milestone but do not include the exact amount.

Expectations for Participant Workers

- If program time (e.g., trainings, initial onboarding, classroom sessions, job search) is paid for by the social enterprise, clarify the expectation that these sessions are mandatory to maintain employment and that the same attendance and disciplinary policies apply. If participant workers are not compensated for program time, clarify expectations around attendance and behavior and any repercussions should such expectations not be met.
- Work/programming schedules including any holidays. If the schedule varies, details should be conveyed about when and how an employee is informed of their schedule.

- Attendance policy for work shift and programmatic activities and clear guidelines and consequences for different types/number of absences (excused, unexcused, emergency) and tardiness. Include whether participant workers are paid for holidays or can accumulate any paid time off.
- Protocols for break times and meal breaks including timing, location, and what is/is not allowed during breaks.
- Communication expectations, including whether the participant worker is expected to have a working cell phone and email address and to update staff with any changes in their contact information.
- Behavioral expectations during training or other programmatic activities. If a program includes classroom training, an outline of the curriculum/syllabus may be helpful. If virtual learning is practiced, outline expectations specific to virtual formats.
- Professional standards, both for on the job and during programming. These may include behavioral expectations, dress code, smoking/smoking area, safety expectations, personal belongings on site/in lockers, facility and equipment use, expectations for visitors, etc.

Benefits and Wraparound Services for Participant Workers

- Wrap-around services and barrier removal support, including any criteria participant workers must meet in order to access the support (e.g., only those who successfully complete the

Employment Law/Policies

- Disciplinary processes, including any zero tolerance policies should be explicitly stated.
- Policies for drug screenings, outside employment, and reporting harassment/discrimination.
- Key safety protocols, including for the prevention of COVID 19.