

**SOUTHWEST WEST CENTRAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE**

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*Education & Administrative Resources*

# Employee Manual

## 2024 - 2025

## LOCATIONS

### Offices

- Marshall
- Montevideo
- Pipestone
- Willmar
- Windom

### ALCs

- Glencoe
- Pipestone
- Windom

### ELCs

- Cosmos
- Marshall
- Montevideo
- New London
- Pipestone
- Windom

### The READY Clinics

- Cosmos
- Marshall
- Montevideo

### SWWC







1420 East College Drive  
Marshall, MN 56258  
507-537-2240

[www.swwc.org](http://www.swwc.org)

The employee handbook does not constitute a contract between the district and its employees and the general guidelines and procedures are not conditions of employment. The information may change after the publication of this handbook, but is generally as current as is practically possible. This handbook is a resource containing important information on SWWC practices, policies and procedures. It is designed to be a guide for employees and is only a summary of some SWWC policies and employment laws. Official, complete board approved policies are available on the SWWC employee portal and employees are expected to read and familiarize themselves with SWWC policies and procedures.

To access Board Policies, Manuals and Legal References,  
[log into the Employee Portal at www.swwc.org/portal](http://www.swwc.org/portal).

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PLEASE NOTE: THE **USE OF TECHNOLOGY SECTION** IS NO LONGER INCLUDED IN THE EMPLOYEE MANUAL.

[TO VIEW THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES CLICK THIS LINK.](#)



SWWC is dedicated to providing unparalleled education and administrative services, innovative solutions and uncompromising support to our members and the communities we serve with integrity, respect and responsive action.

## Executive Director Message

Welcome to SWWC!

SWWC's number one goal is to provide outstanding programs and services for our members. I would encourage and challenge you to set your personal and professional goals high. SWWC has great confidence in your ability to achieve these goals and will support you in this effort.

SWWC's values are service, integrity, sincerity, and collaboration. Service is being committed to the success of our members, coworkers, and others. Integrity is the foundation of our actions. We strive to be honest, trustworthy, respectful, and ethical. Sincerity is being open and honest with our communications and welcoming everyone's contributions. Collaboration improves our ability to provide exceptional service. We want to work with people who embody these values.

Welcome to the SWWC! We are excited that you are here! Your work with our organization will be challenging and rewarding. We look forward to working with you as we carry out our mission of "to be a collaborative partner providing exceptional services, innovative solutions, and proactive support."

Thank you and "cheers to a great year"!

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Cliff Canine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

# Meet the Executive Leadership Team



**Amber Bruns**

*Clinical Director of Behavioral  
Health Services*



**Cliff Carmody**

*Executive Director*



**Liz Deen**

*Senior Director of  
Teaching & Learning*



**Doug Deragisch**

*Director of Risk  
Management*



**Tegan Gillund**

*Director of Finance*



**Shelly Maes**

*Director of Member  
Engagement*



**Mary Palmer**

*Senior Director of  
Special Services*



**Abby Polzine**

*Director of Human  
Resources*



**Christine Schmitt**

*Director of Business  
Services*



**Josh Sumption**

*Chief Technology &  
Information Officer*

# Current Positions

Accounting Specialist 1  
 Accounting Technician-Bookkeeper 1  
 Administrative Assistant 18  
 ALC Teacher 3  
 Alternative Teacher Licensure Coordinator 1  
 Applications Administrator 1  
 Assistant Behavior Analyst 2  
 Assistant Director of Special Education 1  
 Audiologist 1  
 Behavior Analyst 13  
 Behavior Analyst Clinical Lead 1  
 Behavior Analyst Lead 1  
 Behavior Specialist 7  
 Behavior Therapist 9  
 Behavior Therapy Assistant 9  
 Business Service Specialist 11  
 Business Services Payroll Lead 1  
 Career & Technical Project Coordinator 1  
 Career Coordinator 1  
 Certified Occupational Therapy Assistant 4  
 Chief Technology & Information Officer 1  
 Clinical Director of Behavioral Health Services 1  
 Coordinator of Tiered Supports 1

Custodian 2  
 Cybersecurity Analyst 1  
 Cybersecurity Engineer 2  
 Cybersecurity Specialist 1  
 DAPE Teacher 3  
 Data Privacy Specialist 1  
 Dean of Students 1  
 Director of Alternative Programs 1  
 Director of Business Services 1  
 Director of Educational Learning Centers 1  
 Director of Finance 1  
 Director of Human Resources 1  
 Director of Member Engagement 1  
 Director of Network Services 1  
 Director of New Teacher Center 1  
 Director of Special Education 8  
 Due Process Specialist 7  
 ECSE Coordinator 1  
 ECSE Supervisor 1  
 ECSE Teacher 7  
 Education Consultant 4  
 Elementary Education Teacher 1  
 ELL Teacher 1  
 E-Rate Support and MARSS Services Specialist 1

Executive Director	1	School Psychologist	20
Health Paraprofessional	2	School Social Worker	11
Helpdesk Operator	1	Senior Behavior Therapist	1
Helpdesk Support Specialist	1	Senior Director of Special Services	1
High School Teacher	4	Senior Director of Teaching and Learning Services	1
Human Resource Specialist	1	Senior Technology Coordinator	1
Instructional Coach	2	Site Administrator	5
Insurance Specialist	1	Special Education Paraprofessional	108
Interpreter/Translator	1	Special Education Teacher	34
Intervener	1	Specialist of PHD and TBI	1
Lead Instructional Coach	1	Speech/Language Pathologist	17
Long Term Facilities Maintenance Specialist	1	Staff Development and Low Incidence Administrator	1
LPN/Health Para	3	Staffing Coordinator	1
Medical Careers Instructor	1	Student Activities Coordinator	1
Mental Health Consultant	1	Systems Administrator	2
Mental Health Professional	2	Teacher of Deaf and Hard of Hearing	4
Network Coordinator	2	Teacher of Oral/Aural Deaf Education	2
Occupational Therapist	21	Teacher of the Visually Impaired	2
Payroll Processing Specialist	1	Technology Coordinator	6
PBIS Lead Coordinator	1	Technology Integration Program Coordinator	1
Physical Therapist	10	Technology Integration Specialist	3
Physical Therapist Assistant	2	Technology Support Assistant	1
Project Search Teacher	1	Technology Support Specialist I	4
Qualified Supervising Professional	2	Technology Support Specialist II	2
Regional School Nurse Consultant	1	Transition Case Manager	3
Revenue Cycle Specialist	1	Work-Based Learning Coordinator	1
Revenue Cycle Support Specialist	1		
School Advocate	4		
School Counselor	3		
School Nurse	1		



## FAST FACTS



### Staff

- 455 Employees
- 6.18 Years Average Tenure

### Schools

- SWWC serves 185 ELC students at 6 locations and 131 ALC students at 3 locations
- SWWC serves 325 STARRS Online Academy students

### Region

- SWWC serves Regions 6 & 8
- 18 Counties
- Across 12,500 miles



SOUTHWEST WEST CENTRAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE



*Education & Administrative Resources*

### **Mission**

To be a collaborative partner providing exceptional services, innovative solutions and proactive support.

### **Vision**

To create a future where children, families, schools and communities learn, succeed and thrive.

### **Value Statements:**

SWWC believes in service to others. We care about the success of those we serve and those we employ. We work to anticipate the needs of others and collaboratively implement innovative solutions.

SWWC believes integrity is the foundation of our actions. We are honest, trustworthy, transparent and ethical. We are committed to doing the right thing.

SWWC encourages sincerity. We believe in open and honest communication. We welcome everyone's contributions and ideas.

SWWC believes collaboration aids innovation and creativity, improving our ability to provide exceptional services.

**Diversity Statement:** SWWC embraces and celebrates all of our members, and we work to identify unique frameworks within the various communities we serve and actively respond by adjusting our practices to meet the ever changing needs. We strive to recruit diverse and inclusive teams that will have a positive impact on our programs and services and help us better serve our members, customers and employees.

The Board of Directors of SWWC is elected from our membership.  
We have many advisory groups in place to help guide our programs and services.  
The input from our members is essential to the success of our agency.

# Board of Directors



**Matt Coleman**  
*Marshall*



**Ben Bothun**  
*Lac qui Parle  
County*



**Becky Foster**  
*Westbrook-Walnut  
Grove*



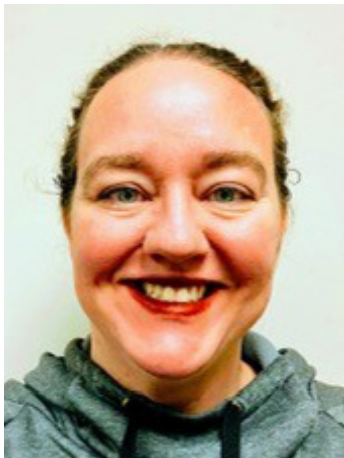
**Carla Olson**  
*KMS*



**Steve Schnieder**  
*Worthington*



**Jody Bauer**  
*Tracy*



**Amanda Lecy**  
*YME*



**Becky Paluch**  
*Ivanhoe*



**Nicole Swanson**  
*Tracy*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The information in the Employee Manual is to be considered as a guide to assist you in performing your job:

- The general guidelines and procedures described in this manual are not conditions of employment. The language is not intended to create a contract between SWWC and any employee. These guidelines do not apply if they are in conflict with the provisions of your group personnel policies or Board policy.
- SWWC, at its option, may change, delete, suspend, or discontinue any part or parts of the general guidelines and procedures in the Employee Manual at any time without prior notice as business, employment legislation, and economic conditions dictate.
- Any such action shall apply to existing as well as to future employees.
- No one other than the Executive Director, or his designee, may alter or modify any of the general guidelines and procedures in the Employee Manual. Any alteration or modification of the general guidelines and procedures in the Employee Manual must be in writing.
- No statement or promise by a supervisor, manager, or director, past or present, may be interpreted as a change in general guidelines and procedures nor will it constitute an agreement with an employee.

Should any part of the Employee Manual be found to be unenforceable and invalid, such finding does not invalidate the entire Employee Manual, but only that particular part. This Employee Manual replaces any and all other or previous Employee Manuals.

## **EXPECTATIONS**

There are certain behaviors you can expect from SWWC. You can expect SWWC to:

- Provide an exciting, challenging, and rewarding workplace and experience;
- Provide safe working conditions;
- Provide training related to the specific needs of your job;
- Explain SWWC policies, rules, and regulations;
- Assure employees an opportunity to discuss any issue or problem with their director or the Executive Director;
- Take prompt and fair action of any complaint which may arise in the everyday conduct of our business to the extent that is practicable;
- Respect individual rights and treat all employees with courtesy and consideration;
- Maintain mutual respect in our working relationship;
- Promote employees on the basis of their ability and merit;
- Keep employees informed of the progress of SWWC, as well as the agency's strategic priorities;
- Promote an atmosphere in keeping with SWWC's vision and mission.

There are certain behaviors/characteristics SWWC will expect from you as an employee. Listed below are expectations SWWC will have for you as an employee:

- Exhibit enthusiasm for learning – strive to learn and grow both intellectually and personally;
- Act with integrity and caring – exhibit honesty, trustworthiness, and compassion in one's work and relationships;
- Value all people – work to create an inclusive and respectful workplace;
- Work as a team – develop collaborative and team-oriented abilities that will create a community of mutual respect, common vision, and shared accomplishments;
- Accept constructive criticism – listen and learn from the constructive criticism your supervisor/director shares with you;

- Serve others – nurture a climate of excellence in service that is responsive to others' needs;
- Celebrate work well done – strive for excellence in all aspects of work and celebrate individual and collective accomplishments.

## **I - General Terms of Employment**

### **Equal Opportunity Employment**

SWWC is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, gender, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status with regard to public assistance, familial status, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation or age. Openings are posted on the SWWC website. Reasonable accommodations for disabled employees will be made as required by law. Employees interested in applying for another position need to complete an Internal Employee Application through the Applitrack Online Application at [www.swwc.org/careers](http://www.swwc.org/careers).

### **Immigration Law Compliance**

All offers of employment are contingent on verification of your right to work in the United States. You will be asked to provide original documents, as required by federal law, to sign a Federal Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification Form. Identification is required that meets federal requirements to establish work eligibility. If you at any time cannot verify your right to work in the United States, SWWC may be obligated to terminate your employment.

### **Employee Background Check**

SWWC specifically reserves any and all rights it may have to conduct background checks, including driving records checks, regarding current employees or applicants with the consent of such individuals. ([Refer to Board Policy 404](#)).

### **At-Will Employment**

Your employment with SWWC is at-will, meaning that either the employee or employer can terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without cause and with or without notice for any reason not prohibited by law. At-will employment can only be overridden by a written contract signed by both the SWWC Board and the employee.

### **Driver's License and Driving Record**

Employees whose work requires operation of a motor vehicle must present and maintain a valid driver's license. Any changes in your driving record which would hinder driving privileges must be reported to your supervisor immediately. If you lose your right to drive on business, and your job is travel-intensive, you may lose your job. ([Refer to Board Policy 404.1](#)).

### **New Employee Mentor Program**

SWWC believes that its most valuable asset is its employees. In order to assist new employees, a complete Employee Mentor Program has been implemented. This is a joint responsibility of the supervisor, mentor and Human Resources. The supervisor assigns a mentor for the new employee. The mentor/mentee packet can be found on the [Employee Portal/Mentor Program](#).

### **Personnel File**

Human Resources maintains an electronic employee personnel file. Keeping your personnel file up-to-date is important. You may see information in your own personnel file by making a written request in advance to review it with a Human Resources representative or receive electronic access to view your file for a 24 hour period of time. You may also make a written request to receive copies of all documents in your file. All medical records, if any, will be kept in a separate confidential file.



## **Non-Exempt and Exempt Employees**

Employees are classified as either “exempt” or “non-exempt.” Non-exempt jobs are generally measured by the hour, require time sheets, and are performed under direct supervision. These employees are subject to the overtime pay provisions as provided by the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and any applicable state laws. Overtime or compensatory time off begins after 40 hours worked in a given calendar week. (The calendar week is defined as 12:01 a.m. Saturday through midnight Friday.)

Exempt employees are those whose duties and responsibilities are exempt from overtime pay provisions as provided by the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and any applicable state laws. They are not paid extra if their work takes more than 40 hours in a week. [See https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/flsa for more information.](https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/flsa)

## **Hours of Work**

Office hours are normally 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday with half an hour off for lunch. Your supervisor will inform you of your specific work hours in your office.

## **Attendance/ Time Off From Work**

If you are unable to report to work, or if you will arrive late, contact your supervisor immediately. If you know in advance that you will need to be absent, request time off directly from your supervisor. If you fail without good reason to return to work from a paid or unpaid leave, you will be considered to have voluntarily resigned. If you have been absent for three consecutive days without notification, you will be considered to have voluntarily resigned. Unexcused absences or tardiness are grounds for dismissal.

## **Break Periods**

Office employees working eight hours per day are allowed a paid fifteen-minute break in the morning and in the afternoon. Breaks should be coordinated with co-workers to maintain adequate coverage at all times. These two fifteen-minute breaks may not be saved up to add to your lunch break, or to arrive late or leave early.

## **Pay Period/Cycle**

Our payroll work week begins on Saturday at 12:01 a.m. and ends on Friday at midnight. SWWC employees are paid by direct deposit semi-monthly on the 15th and the last day of the month. If the 15th or the last day of the month lands on a holiday or weekend, you will receive your paycheck the preceding workday.

## **Time Sheets and Leave Forms**

Non-exempt employees must submit time sheets and both non-exempt and exempt employees must submit leave request forms electronically on SMARTeR using the link below by the end of each pay period. Timesheets and leave request forms are due the 8th and 23rd of each month. Employees should be certain they have the leave available before they make the request. Whenever possible, submit leave request forms as soon as you know you will be absent. When this is not possible, submit leave request forms as soon as possible after you return. Timesheets and leave request forms must be digitally signed by you and your supervisor. Your employee ID and pin qualify as an electronic signature when you log into <https://swscer.swsc.org/Login.aspx?dn=0991>. The leave codes chart and descriptions can be found on the Employee Portal - Payroll page.

## **Overtime/Compensatory Time for Non-Exempt Employees**

According to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) non-exempt employees receive overtime pay at one and a half times their regular rate of pay or compensatory time of time and a half for approved hours worked over 40 hours in a work week. Comp time generally means time off in lieu of time and a half pay. The work week is defined as 12:01 a.m. Saturday through 12:00 midnight Friday, with hours worked including only hours on the job and does not include paid sick leave, personal leave, holidays, annual leave, or other paid leave time.

The use of comp time in lieu of cash is pursuant to an agreement between the employer and employee and complies with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. According to the CEA Master Agreement classified employees have the option of overtime pay or comp time at time and a half for all hours worked in excess of 40 hours per work week.

Non-exempt employees will receive their regular rate of pay or “other” comp time at straight time for approved hours worked less than or equal to 40 hours in a work week when the week includes a paid holiday(s) and hours total more than 40 hours (i.e. 35 hours worked + 8 hours paid holiday would result in either a straight time payment of 43 hours or payment of 40 hours and 3 hours of “other” comp time). “Other” comp time generally means time off in lieu of straight time pay.

Listed below are the guidelines/procedures:

- All overtime hours and “other” comp hours must be approved in advance by the employee’s supervisor.
- All overtime and “other” comp time will be automatically banked as comp time unless cash payment is requested in writing by the employee on his/her timesheet.
- After comp time has been accrued, SWWC will not force an employee to take comp time at a particular time.
- An employee who requests to use comp time which he/she has accrued will be permitted to use the time off within a reasonable period of time after making the request, if the time off would not unduly disrupt the operations of SWWC.
- The employee may accrue a maximum of 240 hours of comp time. Once the limit has been reached, the employee will be paid monetary overtime compensation at the regular rate earned by the employee at the time he/she receives the payment.
- Upon termination of employment, the employee will be paid for the unused accrued comp time based on final regular rate of pay.
- Cash payment for accrued comp time will be paid to the employee at the end of each fiscal year at the regular rate being earned by the employee at the time he/she receives the payment.

### **Unpaid Time**

If you are a non-exempt employee with paid leave and insurance benefits, and your pay period includes fewer hours worked than your normal workweek, use compensatory time or annual leave, if available to you. Unpaid time may force a pro-rata reduction in benefits.

### **Paycheck Distribution/Direct Deposit**

Direct deposit is the payroll method used by SWWC. Direct deposit is safer, faster, more confidential, and more convenient than traditional paycheck distribution. It is also more efficient and helps keep administrative costs down. You can designate numerous separate accounts and specify the amount that goes into each.

### **SMART eR Website**

SMART eR allows you to view your payroll information on a secure website and to print your pay stub use the following link: <https://swscer.swsc.org/login.aspx?dn=0991>. This link can also be found on the Employee Portal. Through this secure website, you will be able to view and print the following information:

- Current and historical payroll information, by paycheck date (this is your check stub or direct deposit information)
- Year-to-date pay summary
- Payroll deduction and benefit information
- Leave history (summary and detail of leave earned and used)
- W-4 tax withholding information showing marital status, exemptions, and extra pay, if applicable
- Annual W-2 and W-2 information sheet and 1095, if applicable

- Employee information (address, phone number, etc.)
- Emergency contact information
- Licensure information
- Wage statement

You will login by entering your employee number and the password is 0991xxxx where xxxx is the last four digits of your social security number. Your employee number (EMP ID) can be requested from Human Resources. You will then be required to change your password and set up security questions. Your password must be at least eight characters and must contain at least one lower case letter, one upper case letter, one number and one symbol. You must set up a minimum of three security questions. Every time you log in, you will be asked one of your security questions to verify. If you forget your password, there's a button on the bottom of the login page to change it, but in order to use this option you must have set up a security question previously. Otherwise, please contact Payroll to reset your password to 0991xxxx where xxxx is the last four digits of your social security number.

### **Wage Disclosure Protection**

The Wage Disclosure Protection was effective August 1, 2014, and states that SWWC:

- Shall not require nondisclosure by an employee of his or her wages as a condition of employment;
- Shall not require an employee to sign a waiver or other document which purports to deny an employee the right to disclose the employee's wages; or
- Shall not take any adverse employment action against an employee for disclosing the employee's own wages or discussing another employee's wages which have been disclosed voluntarily.

For more information, please refer to M.S. 181.172.

### **Error in Pay**

Every effort is made to avoid errors in your paycheck. If you believe an error has been made, contact Payroll immediately. They will take the necessary steps to research the problem and to assure that any necessary correction is made promptly.

### **Wage Garnishments**

When court-ordered deductions are to be taken from your paycheck, you will be notified. SWWC acts in accordance with the Federal Consumer Credit Protection Act, which places restrictions on the total amount that may be garnished from your paycheck.

### **Performance Evaluations**

Generally a performance evaluation will be conducted annually for each employee. New employees will generally be evaluated near the end of their Introductory Period. For more information go to [Employee Portal, Employee Evaluation](#).

Probationary Certified Staff (CSA) Performance Evaluation: New certified staff (CSA) not already tenured in Minnesota are probationary for their first three years of employment and must have three evaluations during each year of probation as outlined in M.S. 122A.40. A probationary teacher must teach at least 90 days each year to complete their probationary period. New CSA staff already tenured in Minnesota are probationary for their first year and must have three evaluations during their year of probation.

### **Discipline**

To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, SWWC expects employees to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all employees and the organization. It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. ([Review Policy 403.](#))



## **II - Benefits**

### **SWWC Group Health Insurance**

Group health insurance is available to employees who qualify for benefits. Employees are required to enroll in health insurance through SWWC unless their spouse has other health coverage. Verification of other health coverage is required.

For employees who are eligible for group health insurance, SWWC provides a contribution and any excess cost of premiums over that allowance is deducted from your paycheck. The contribution varies depending upon employee group and whether you choose family or single coverage. You become eligible for coverage on the 1st of the month following your date of hire or the 1st of the month if your hire date is the 1st; coverage ends the last day of the month that you terminate employment or lose eligibility. School-based employees' insurance ends 8/31. Refer to the summary on the Employee Portal.

### **Group Long-Term Disability Insurance**

If you are eligible to participate in the group disability plan, disability insurance is designed to assist employees with your income should you become partially or totally disabled and are unable to perform the essential functions of your job. There is a 60 consecutive calendar day elimination period. The premium for long-term disability insurance is paid by SWWC with the exception of administrators. Refer to your policy on the Employee Portal.

### **Group Life and Accidental Death and Dismemberment Insurance**

If you are eligible to participate in the group life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance plan, this insurance is payable in the event of your death in accordance with the policy while you are insured. You may change your beneficiary whenever you wish by submitting the appropriate documents to Human Resources. The premium for life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance is paid by SWWC. Refer to the policy on the Employee Portal.

### **Voluntary Vision Insurance**

Voluntary vision insurance is available to employees who qualify for benefits with the full premium paid pre-tax by the employee. A summary is on the Employee Portal.

### **Voluntary Dental Insurance**

Voluntary dental insurance is available to employees who qualify for benefits with the full premium paid pre-tax by the employee. A summary is on the Employee Portal.

### **Voluntary Aflac Supplemental Insurance**

Voluntary supplemental insurance is available to employees who qualify for benefits with the full premium paid pre-tax or post-tax by employee, depending on plan.

### **Flexible Spending Accounts**

Flexible spending accounts are voluntary programs and are available to employees who work at least half time. You can legally avoid paying state and federal income tax and FICA on certain personal expenses. You determine at the beginning of the plan year how much you expect to spend on child care and out-of-pocket medical, dental and/or vision expenses. If you enrolled in the Health Savings Account, you cannot flex medical expenses – you can only flex dental and vision expenses. The flex plan year is fiscal year (July 1st – June 30th). Your payroll-deducted premium for health insurance and any voluntary insurances are automatically

flexed and is considered a flex election. Your estimated out-of-pocket premium, medical expenses and your share of SWWC's group medical insurance are deducted over the course of the year from your check before taxes. All of the estimated amounts must be deducted from your pay by the end of each plan year even if you do not spend it. If you overestimate expenses, the unused money cannot be refunded to you. You have 90 days after the end of the plan year to submit a claim for reimbursement. Flex elections cannot be changed unless there is a qualifying event. Maximum amount you can flex for dependent care is \$5,000 and \$3,200 for medical. For more information on qualifying events, contact Human Resources.

### **Workers Compensation**

All employees are entitled to Workers' Compensation benefits. This coverage is automatic and immediate and protects you from an on-the-job injury/illness. An on-the-job injury is defined as an accidental injury suffered in the course of your work, or an illness which is directly related to performing your assigned job duties. All injuries or illnesses arising out of the scope of your employment must be reported to your supervisor immediately. Employees returning to work after being absent due to a work-related injury must report to their supervisor prior to beginning work and may be required to bring a doctor's clearance for returning to work.

**Paradigm**

24/7 Nurse Triage  
Required for Workplace Injuries

**1-844-847-8708**

### **Retirement Plans – TRA/PERA**

SWWC employees are public employees. In addition to social security (FICA) and Medicare insurance, eligible employees must be enrolled in one of Minnesota's public retirement programs, Teachers Retirement Association (TRA) or Public Employees Retirement Association (PERA) unless you are an annuitant. TRA is required of employees for whose position requires a teaching license. To learn more, go to [www.minnesotatra.org](http://www.minnesotatra.org) or call 800-657-3669. PERA is required of all other employees who are eligible by PERA standards. To learn more, go to [www.mnpera.org](http://www.mnpera.org) or call 800-652-9026.

### **Tax-Sheltered Annuities**

A tax-sheltered annuity (TSA) is available to public employees and is voluntary. The advantage of a Traditional TSA is that you have a regular, automatic savings plan on which you pay no state or federal income taxes until retirement. SWWC also offers Roth TSAs, which are post-tax contributions. In addition, employee groups negotiated for matching deferred compensation, if you are eligible for benefits, once you have completed your introductory period. These plans are pursuant to Minn. Stat. 356.24 (2007), as amended, and in accordance with SWWC's 403(b) Plan documents. Paperwork must be completed and submitted to Human Resources. For more information, see [Employee Portal/Employee Benefits & Discount Programs/Retirement Plans/Benefits, Annuities-403\(b\).](#)

### **Minnesota Deferred Compensation 457(b) Plan (MNDCP)**

The Minnesota Deferred Compensation 457(b) Plan (MNDCP) is a voluntary retirement savings plan (similar to a 401(k) or 403(b)) available to any full-time, part-time, or temporary Minnesota public employee. The MNDCP allows eligible employees to supplement retirement income from their Minnesota public pension and Social Security benefits. Employees save and invest pre-tax and/or Roth after-tax dollars through automatic payroll deduction, called salary deferrals. Eligible employees not fully matching their 403(b) or Thrive benefit may receive matching funds according to their group's negotiated agreement. To learn more or to sign up, please visit the Minnesota State Retirement System's website at: <https://employers.msrs.state.mn.us/plan-overview>

### **Matching Benefits**

Upon successful completion of an employee's introductory period, employees are eligible for an employer match based on the negotiated rate based on the group the employee falls under. The employee match can be applied towards a 403(b), 457(b), a Thrive benefit or a combination of the three, not to go over the max of the employer match. For details on the employer match, please see the personnel policy or master agreement based on the group.

## Thrive Benefits

Thrive Flexible Matching Program is another option that employees can utilize to receive their employer matching funds. Employees may choose to contribute to their student loan payments, an emergency savings fund, and/or a 529 college savings plan. Eligible employees not fully matching their 403(b) or 457(b) may receive matching funds according to their group's negotiated agreement. To learn more, please visit the Thrive page of the Employee Portal.



## Employee Assistance Program

Another benefit SWWC offers its employees is the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAP provides a confidential, easily accessible professional counseling service for employees whose personal problems are affecting their abilities to function effectively at work or home. This service is available to all employees and their immediate family members who have questions concerning legal, family, or financial issues, child care, elder care, relationships, substance abuse or addiction questions and concerns, work-related issues and any mental health issue. For more information, go to the [Employee Portal, Employee Benefits & Discount Programs, EAP](#). Sand Creek EAP services toll-free number: 888-243-5744, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## Employee Awards

Each year, long-term employees are honored by presenting service awards at an annual function. Service awards are given after you have completed 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, and 40 years of consecutive service.

In addition, the following awards are available as outlined below:

Giving Recognition for Outstanding Work (G.R.O.W.) Program recognizes employees for outstanding work throughout the year by their co-workers, supervisors, and our members. Employees can be submitted for recognition at [www.swwc.org/grow](http://www.swwc.org/grow) using a simple online form. The approved submissions will be posted on the G.R.O.W. page of SWWC website, sent to the employee via email with a copy to their director, and highlighted on the TEAMS - SWWC All Staff - Celebrations group. Each month SWWC will randomly draw a winner from all submissions that month, and a \$25.00 coupon for SWWC online clothing store will be awarded.

Senior Fellows Award offers \$1,000 to Certified Staff and Program Specialists who qualify. The purpose of the award is to recognize Certified Staff or Program Specialists for their dedication, longevity, and continuing education in fulfilling SWWC's mission. The guidelines and application form are available on the [Employee Benefits & Discounts Programs page of the Employee Portal](#). The application is due by April 1.

## Professional Development

SWWC is proud of its employees and encourages continuous growth and development.

## Staff Development/SWWC Inservices

SWWC assists employees in continuing their education by providing staff inservice events, subsidizing attendance at conferences and workshops, and by providing on-the-job training in some areas. All employees attend SWWC staff inservice days. Absence must be approved by your director.

## Tuition Assistance

SWWC values the professional development of our employees. We have a formal tuition assistance program pertaining to reimbursement for certain educational expenses. The employee should fill out the appropriate Tuition Assistance application on the employee portal. If an employee requests Tuition Assistance and chooses to terminate their employment with SWWC prior to three years from the completion of their course

and/or degree, the employee will be required to reimburse SWWC for expenses paid by SWWC as outlined in the agreement.

### **Conferences and Workshops**

If it's advantageous to improve the professional skills of staff, SWWC may subsidize attendance at a conference, workshop, or convention. Requests to attend a conference or workshop must be turned in via the [Professional Development site via Frontline Central](#).

### **Course Credit Approval for Lane Changes (CSA)**

The CSA Master Agreement provides for salary lane changes for employees who improve their professional skills by continuing their graduate education. In order to count toward a lane change, a course or workshop must be germane to your assignment as determined by your director. Course credit approval forms must be completed and submitted to your director before you take the course or workshop. Course credit approval forms must be turned in via [Frontline Central](#). If your director approves the course or workshop, you will receive notification and the form will be routed to Human Resources. If you are working towards an advanced degree, you need to request approval from your director.

For more information, please reach out to Human Resources at [hr@swwc.org](mailto:hr@swwc.org).

## **III - Leaves**

### **Holidays**

Eligible employees will receive the following paid holidays when they occur during the normal term of active employment: Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving (Thursday and Friday), Christmas Day, New Year's Day, Juneteenth and Memorial Day, and two floating holidays that may be used at any time throughout the designated year. If you are required to work on a holiday because the schools you serve are in session, you may take your holiday on a different day that you and your supervisor agree.

### **Annual Leave**

Each employee group has its own schedule for earning annual leave. SWWC will try to let you use your annual leave as desired, but annual leave cannot interfere with your division's/department's operation. You should plan ahead with your supervisor on when to use your annual leave. Annual leave is nearly always taken by mutual agreement, but in the event of conflict SWWC reserves the right to schedule employee annual leave time. If you have more annual leave than what is normally earned in a fiscal year, you are notified by Payroll that these hours/days need to be used by December 31. If you do not use your annual leave by December 31, your excess leave will be deducted on January 1.

### **Earned Sick and Safe Time**

Employees in Minnesota are entitled to earned sick and safe time, a form of paid leave. Employees must accrue at least one hour of earned sick and safe time for every 30 hours they work, up to at least 48 hours in a year. The ESST leave is not additional leave that goes above and beyond SWWC's current Sick Leave plan. Since our current plan meets or exceeds the requirements of ESST, the only thing that will change for our staff who are eligible for Sick Leave, is the expansion of reasons the leave can be used for.

Part-time staff that did not qualify for Sick Leave prior, but will meet the minimum requirements of the ESST law, will now be able to accrue up to 48 hours a year. These hours can be carried over from year to year with an accrual maximum of 80 hours.

Earned sick and safe time can be used for:

- an employee's mental or physical illness, treatment or preventive care;

- the mental or physical illness, treatment or preventive care of an employee's family member;
- absence due to domestic abuse, sexual assault or stalking of an employee or their family member;
- closure of an employee's workplace due to weather or public emergency or closure of their family member's school or care facility due to weather or public emergency; and
- when determined by a health authority or health care professional that an employee or their family member is at risk of infecting others with a communicable disease.
- making funeral arrangements, attending a funeral service or memorial or addressing financial or legal matters that arise after the death of a family member.

If an employee plans to use earned sick and safe time for an appointment, preventive care or another permissible reason they know of in advance, inform their supervisor in writing as far in advance as possible. In situations where an employee cannot provide advance notice, the employee should contact their supervisor as soon as they know they will be unable to work.

### **Sick Leave**

When the use of this type of leave is needed, you should inform your supervisor as soon as possible. The electronic leave form should be completed prior to the leave. If this is not possible, complete it upon your return to work. When illness or disability occurs while you are already on holiday, vacation, personal leave, bereavement leave, or unpaid leave of absence, the use of sick leave shall not begin before the end of that leave.

An employee who is eligible for unpaid leave of absence according to the terms of their group's personnel policies will not be refused the use of paid sick leave for sickness or disability, whether or not incident to pregnancy, under the following conditions:

- No employee may receive more paid sick leave than he/she is entitled to under terms of his/her employment.
- No employee may receive paid sick leave upon certification of a physician that the employee is well enough to work.
- No employee may receive paid sick leave while he/she is on an approved unpaid leave of absence of any kind.
- Sickness or disability which begins before an employee has completed his/her work prior to an approved unpaid leave will be eligible for paid sick leave, provided that SWWC may require a doctor's certification at the employee's expense for any sick leave of three days or more. SWWC reserves the right to require and operate by the opinion of a medical doctor of its choice at SWWC expense.

### **Personal Leave**

Eligible employees may use personal leave as specified in your employee group's personnel policies, for personal business that cannot be conducted at other than normal working hours. Personal leave must be approved in advance by your supervisor. You may not take personal leave on the day preceding or following a holiday or vacation.

### **Bereavement Leave**

Up to five days leave per circumstance may be granted from accumulated sick leave for death in the employee's immediate family. The specific amount of leave allowed is subject to the discretion of the executive director depending upon the circumstances. Immediate family is defined as the employee's spouse, child, step child, parent, step parent, brother, sister, spouse's parent, grandparent, or other relative living in the same household as the employee. It is recognized that in some unique circumstances, other situations may be considered for bereavement leave. Under these special circumstances, a request may be made to the executive director for bereavement leave consideration only after personal leave has been exhausted. Each of these circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis with the decision by the executive director being final.



### **Jury Duty**

If you are called for jury duty during the work year, please notify your supervisor as soon as possible. Send the HR Assistant a copy of your jury summons. Employees can elect to either use annual leave and keep the daily jury stipend or fulfill their jury duty on SWWC time and turn the stipend over to SWWC. Any expense reimbursement, such as mileage, is yours to keep.

### **Subpoena to Testify**

If you are subpoenaed to testify for a school-related issue, please notify your supervisor and Human Resources as soon as possible. Send Human Resources a copy of your subpoena. ([Refer to Policy 408 in the Board Policies.](#))

### **Military Reserves or National Guard Leave of Absence**

If you are a member of the Minnesota National Guard or a reserve component of the military or naval forces of the United States, you are entitled to a leave of absence from employment without loss of pay, seniority status, efficiency rating, vacation, sick leave or other benefits for time that the employee is engaged with the National Guard or reserves in training or active service not exceeding 15 days in any calendar year. You are expected to notify your supervisor as soon as you are aware of the dates you will be on duty so that arrangements can be made for replacement during this absence, if necessary. Send HR a copy of your military orders. ([Refer to Policy 410 in the Board Policies.](#))

### **Unpaid Leaves**

Occasionally, for medical, personal, or other reasons, you may need to be temporarily released from the duties of your job. Time off for any reason during a working day will count first against your allotted sick days or personal days, as appropriate. Once you have used all of your accrued sick or personal days, the time may be counted against your accrued compensatory time and annual leave time. Thereafter, any time off will be without pay. If you need unpaid time off, seek approval for your absence well in advance. The terms of your group's personnel policies control the granting of unpaid leaves. Failure to return to work as scheduled from an approved leave of absence or to inform your supervisor of an acceptable reason for not returning as scheduled will be considered a voluntary resignation of employment. All requests for leaves of absence shall be submitted in writing to your supervisor. Each request shall provide sufficient detail such as the reason for the leave, the expected duration of the leave, and the relationship of family members, if applicable.

### **Family and Medical Leave Act**

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), provides employees with the right to take unpaid leave during a 12-month period. Twelve workweeks of leave may be taken for one or more of the following reasons: (1) for the birth of the employee's child and to care for such child; (2) placement of an adopted or foster child with the employee; (3) to care for the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent with a serious health condition; (4) the employee's serious health condition makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee's job; and/or (5) any qualifying exigency arising from the employee's spouse, son, daughter or parent being on active duty or notified of an impending call or order to active duty, in the reserve component of the Armed Forces or a retired member of the regular Armed Forces or reserve component in support of a contingency operation. Twenty-six workweeks of leave may be taken to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the eligible employee is the service member's spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin. To be eligible for FMLA leave, an employee must have been employed by SWWC for at least 12 months and must have worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12-month period preceding the leave. Please notify your supervisor and Human Resources. ([Refer to Policy 410 in the Board Policies.](#))

### **Accepting Other Employment or Going into Business While on Leave of Absence**

If you accept any employment or go into business while on a leave of absence from SWWC, you will be considered to have voluntarily resigned from employment as of the day on which you began your leave of absence.

### **Insurance Premium Payment During Leaves of Absence**

For any type of unpaid leave of absence, other than FMLA, you will be responsible for paying the total premiums for your coverage and that of your dependents. Failure to do so may result in loss of coverage and possible refusal by the insurance carrier to allow your coverage to be reinstated. Consult with Payroll to set up a payment schedule.

## **IV - Workplace Procedures**

### **Communications**

Successful working conditions and relationships depend upon successful communication. Not only do you need to stay aware of changes in procedures, policies, and general information, you also need to communicate your ideas, suggestions, personal goals, or problems as they affect your work. In addition to the exchanges of information and expressions of ideas and attitudes which occur daily, make certain you are aware of and utilize all SWWC methods of communication, including the Employee Manual, Coop Connection, Employee Portal, e-mail, bulletin boards, discussions with your supervisor, memoranda, staff meetings, newsletters, training sessions, and SWWC web site. Employees are expected to check their SWWC email on a regular basis. Employees are encouraged to bring forward their suggestions and good ideas about how SWWC can be made a better place to work, and programs and services to members enhanced. Please talk it over with your supervisor.

### **Legislative Activity**

Employees may not use SWWC or their position within SWWC to represent or engage in legislative activities unless specifically approved by the Executive Director.

### **Recording Conversations**

As an employee of SWWC, you have access to certain private and/or confidential data. In order to adequately safeguard that data and to provide for an environment that is conducive to building positive working and educational relationships, SWWC prohibits employees from recording, whether via tape recorder, electronic recorder, digital recorder, video recorder, or any other type of recording device, software, or system any conversation between a SWWC employee and any other SWWC employee, or any member of the public while acting in the scope of your employment duties, unless you are authorized to do so.

This is not intended to limit you from recording students for educational purposes. In order to record students, you must request approval from your supervisor annually and you must ensure that you are following the data retention schedule. If you record a student for your purposes only, you must destroy it shortly after you have recorded it. If you share the recording (video, tape recording, etc.) it is a part of the student's educational record and must be maintained in the student's file. Failure to abide by this policy may lead to disciplinary action. If you have any questions about this policy, please contact your supervisor or Human Resources.

### **Technology Equipment, Applications, Email and Voice Communications**

SWWC makes every effort to provide the best available technology to employees. SWWC's Internet Usage Policy is meant to advise those who use our equipment on the subject of access to and disclosure of computer-stored information, voice mail messages and electronic mail messages created, sent or received by SWWC employees with the use of SWWC equipment. ([Refer to Policy 524 in the Board Policies.](#)) [Refer to the Technology Resources page of the Employee Portal for further guidelines regarding the use of technology resources when conducting the business of SWWC.](#)

To ensure SWWC's compliance with Minnesota Statute § 13.32, the Educational Data section of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act; all software, websites, or other online resources, also referred to as "Technology Providers," which are utilized on SWWC technology systems or utilized for purposes of delivering



curriculum to students in SWWC programs, must be authorized by the SWWC Department of Technology. Resources will require a review process that includes the evaluation of the Technology Provider's Terms and Conditions, Privacy Policy, and the establishment of contractual terms that specify the provider's acceptance of SWWC's data privacy requirements as they relate to student information. SWWC will be utilizing a blanket approach in governing our compliance with state statute, in that all Technology Providers, regardless of the data being maintained, will be subject to a full review by the SWWC Department of Technology. SWWC will undergo a grace-period during the 2022-2023 school year, during which existing Technology Providers will be reviewed, but any new Technology Provider resources that are requested must first be fully reviewed before they will be permitted for use by any SWWC staff member. The review process for newly requested Technology Provider resources can be expected to take up to 60 days to complete. The requirements and full details of this process can be found in the SWWC Technology Resources Manual.

### **Accommodations for lactating employees**

Break time: Employers must provide daily break time for employees to express milk, regardless of their child's age or whether the breaks disrupt operations.

Private space: Employers must provide a clean, private, and secure room for expressing milk, other than a bathroom or toilet stall. The space should be close to the employee's workspace, have access to an electrical outlet, and be free from intrusion.

Compensation: Employers cannot reduce an employee's compensation for expressing milk.

Work schedule: Employers must provide work schedule and work pattern flexibility to accommodate break times for one year or longer after the child's birth

Please reach out to [hr@swwc.org](mailto:hr@swwc.org) if you have any questions.

### **Harassment and Violence**

SWWC wants employees to feel respected and safe and prohibits any form of harassment and violence. If you feel you have been a victim, you should file a complaint as soon as possible with your director, or Human Rights Officer, or Executive Director. The Human Rights Officer is the Director of Human Resources. You will not be subject to any form of reprisal or retaliation for making a good faith complaint under this policy. (*Refer to Policy 413 in the Board Policies.*)

### **Title IX Sex Nondiscrimination**

SWWC does not discriminate on the basis of sex in its education programs or activities, and it is required by Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972, and its implementing regulations, not to discriminate in such a manner. The requirement not to discriminate in its education program or activity extends to admission and employment. SWWC is committed to maintaining an education and work environment that is free from discrimination based on sex, including sexual harassment.

SWWC prohibits sexual harassment that occurs within its education programs and activities. When SWWC has actual knowledge of sexual harassment in its education program or activity against a person in the United States, it shall promptly respond in a manner that is not deliberately indifferent.

This policy applies to sexual harassment that occurs within the SWWC's education programs and activities and that is committed by a SWWC employee, student, or other members of the school community. This policy does not apply to sexual harassment that occurs off school grounds, in a private setting, and outside the scope of SWWC's education programs and activities. This policy does not apply to sexual harassment that occurs outside the geographic boundaries of the United States, even if the sexual harassment occurs in the SWWC's education programs or activities.

Any student, parent, or guardian having questions regarding the application of Title IX and its regulations and/or this policy and grievance process should discuss them with the Title IX Coordinator.

SWWC's Title IX Coordinator(s) are:

Primary: Abby Polzine, Director of Human Resources  
Phone: 507-537-2243  
E-mail: Abby.Polzine@swwc.org  
Address: 1420 E College Drive Marshall, MN 56258

Alternate: Cliff Carmody, Executive Director  
Phone: 507-537-2251  
E-mail: Cliff.Carmody@swwc.org  
Address: 1420 E College Drive Marshall, MN 56258

Questions relating solely to Title IX and its regulations may be referred to the Title IX Coordinator(s), the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights of the United States Department of Education, or both.

The effective date of this policy is August 14, 2020 and applies to alleged violations of this policy occurring on or after August 14, 2020.

You can access our full Policy 522 – Title IX Sex Nondiscrimination Policy, Grievance Procedure and Process here: [Title IX](#).

### **Bullying Prohibition**

A safe and civil environment is needed for students to learn and attain high academic standards and to promote healthy human relationships. Any person who believes they have been the target or victim of bullying or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct that may constitute bullying or prohibited conduct shall report the alleged acts immediately to the principal or building supervisor. ([Refer to Policy 514 in the Board Policies.](#))

### **Mandated Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect**

All employees are subject to the mandatory reporting policy. If you know or have reason to believe a child is being neglected or physically or sexually abused, or has been neglected or physically or sexually abused within the preceding three years, you are required to immediately report the information to the local welfare agency, police department, or county sheriff. If the report is about abuse in school, both the oral and written report can be made to the Minnesota Department of Education. Every complaint of alleged child abuse that occurred at school or a school-related activity must be reported to MDE, even if the complaint is not believable. An oral report must be made immediately (defined by law as within 24 hours) by telephone or otherwise and a written report must follow within 72 hours (not counting weekends and holidays). ([Refer to Policy 414 in the Board Policies.](#))

### **Employee-Student Relationship**

SWWC is committed to an educational environment in which all students are treated with respect and in a professional manner. Employees are expected to exercise good judgment and professionalism in all interpersonal relationships with students. Such relationships must be and remain on a teacher-student basis or an employee-student basis. ([Refer to Policy 423 in the Board Policies.](#))

### **Smoking**

Studies by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Surgeon General have identified second-hand tobacco smoke as responsible for cases of lung cancer and other respiratory diseases. In response to the increasing awareness of the health risks posed by second-hand smoke, Minnesota passed the Minnesota

Clean Indoor Air Act restricting smoking in public places. Smoking and use of tobacco products are prohibited in SWWC offices, buildings, and vehicles. ([Refer to Policy 419 in the Board Policies.](#))

### **Drug-Free Workplace**

It is the goal of SWWC to maintain a drug-free workplace. ([Refer to Policy 418 in the Board Policies.](#))

### **Employee Portal**

The Employee Portal has information available to SWWC employees only including forms, policies, manuals, and benefit information. You must log in to view these. General access to some resources may be obtained from the Portal without logging in. Your login is the same as your email access. The instructions are listed below:

- Connect your device to the Internet if it is not already connected.
- Open a web browser (Internet Explorer, Chrome, FireFox, Safari, etc.)
- In the address line, type in [www.swwc.org](http://www.swwc.org).
- Under User Options, click "Sign In" in the top right corner of the screen.
- When using the Employee Portal, your username and password is the same one that you use to access your SWWC Email or logon to your SWWC computer.
- Scroll below the sign in button and click the orange g+ Sign in with Google button.
- More information should now show on the left sidebar

## **BUSINESS OFFICE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **When will I be reimbursed for expenses I incurred?**

If the Business Office receives your fully approved reimbursement request between the 15th and the 31st of the month, your reimbursement will be deposited with your payroll check on the 15th. If your reimbursement request is received between the 1st and the 15th of the month, you will be reimbursed with your payroll check on the last day of the month.

### **What are the meal maximums for SWWC employees?**

Meal maximums are recommended rates received from the State of Minnesota and have been established by the SWWC Board of Directors. The maximum meal reimbursement per day, unless otherwise specified by grant guidelines, is listed below:

\$50/day - MN Non-Metro, MN Metro & Out-of-State

To be reimbursed for all authorized expenses, you must submit an expense report accompanied by original itemized receipts and approved by your supervisor.

### **What meals/food is allowed while traveling?**

- The purpose of our meal reimbursement policy is to reimburse employees for breakfast, lunch, or dinner expenses while traveling and doing business for the agency. It is not to reimburse employees for snacks.
- The daily meal maximum includes tips (not to exceed 20%) and service/delivery charges.
- Routine lunches on the road while performing your typical job duties are not reimbursed.
- Alcoholic beverages are never reimbursable.
- Meal expenses that are not accompanied by an overnight stay should not be charged to the company credit card. These meals should be paid personally and submitted for reimbursement so that taxes may be withheld.

**Does SWWC have to pay Sales Tax?**

SWWC is a tax exempt organization and we should avoid paying sales tax whenever we can. There are some items not exempt from MN sales tax law (e.g. meals, lodging, and sales tax paid to other states, etc.), however, we should avoid paying sales tax when state or federal law do not require us to do so.

**What is SWWC's rate for mileage reimbursement?**

The mileage reimbursement rate per mile is the IRS standard business mileage rate. The rate is set by the IRS to include the costs of operating an automobile such as depreciation, financing costs, maintenance, repairs, tires, gasoline, oil, insurance, taxes, and vehicle registration fees. Employees who drive their own vehicle should check with their insurance agent to see if their personal auto coverage applies if they are using their personal car for business purposes.

**What distance does SWWC use to determine mileage?**

The distance used to determine mileage is the shortest reasonable route from your designated office location, residence or designated starting point to the destination, whichever is less. This policy must be adhered to whether SWWC is reimbursing the mileage or the local district is reimbursing the mileage.

**Does SWWC have vehicles available for use?**

SWWC purchases or leases vehicles for use by staff on SWWC business. A company vehicle will be assigned to employees at the discretion of the Director of Finance. Mileage records will be reviewed annually by the business office. All staff are encouraged to car pool or teleconference whenever possible to minimize mileage expenses. Also SWWC has a number of vehicles available for check out at the Marshall Office and can be used for traveling to meeting, conferences, etc.

**How do I pay for gas & maintenance related items for vehicles?**

All vehicle fuel purchases must be made through the company provided gas credit card. You will be required to enter your personal PIN number and the odometer reading when you swipe your card. Car washes and small items such as windshield washer fluid may also be charged to the gas credit card. All vehicle maintenance must be made through the company provided maintenance card at Enterprise approved providers. All maintenance is covered by the leasing company, so do not charge or pay for any maintenance on SWWC vehicles.

**What do I do if I am involved in an accident?**

If you are involved in a vehicular accident, render assistance required by law and common sense. Comply with the law in reporting the accident to proper authorities. Exchange information with other drivers

concerning insurance companies. If you are able, make a note of driving conditions, witnesses, and other immediate information. Do not make accusations or accept blame. Obtain a copy of the police report for the SWWC Business Office, or ask that one be sent there directly. Each SWWC vehicle has a card in the glove compartment with insurance and reporting information. Notify the Business Office as soon as possible so that the claim can be reported to the insurance company.

If you are in an accident while driving your own car on SWWC business, follow the same procedures as above, except that physical damage to your vehicle, including immediate towing if required, is your responsibility rather than SWWC. Physical damage to your vehicle is covered by your own collision or comprehensive coverage if you have any, not by SWWC. Follow up with a workers compensation claim, if appropriate.

**What contracts need to be approved by the SWWC Board of Directors?**

All contracts require SWWC Board approval, with the exception of consultant contracts under \$15,000. Employees who have questions regarding these guidelines should contact the Director of Finance.

**[For a full version of SWWC Finance and Expense information please visit the Employee Portal Policies & Manuals page.](#)**

## **V - Separation of Employment**

### **Return of SWWC Property**

Any SWWC property issued to you, such as computer equipment, keys, or any agency credit cards must be returned to your director at the time of your termination/resignation. You will be responsible for any lost or damaged items. The value of any property issued and not returned may be deducted from your paycheck, and you may be required to sign a wage deduction authorization form for this purpose.

Any personally owned devices with access to SWWC resources or storing SWWC data must have such access or data removed before you leave the premises on your final day of employment. Your supervisor and the SWWC Technology Department Staff have the right to review devices that have been utilized to access SWWC resources to ensure such access is removed, and assist you in the process of removing data and access to resources if necessary. Data stored on personally owned devices, including, but not limited to computers, cell phones, removable storage devices, must be provided to your supervisor and removed from such a devices upon separation of employment.

### **Insurance General Notice Continuation Coverage Rights Introduction**

This notice contains important information about your right to temporary extension of coverage under SWWC Group Insurance Program (the Plan). The right to continuation coverage was created by a federal law, the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1985 (COBRA), as well as by certain state laws. Continuation coverage may become available to you and to qualified dependents who are covered under the Plan when you would otherwise lose your group health, dental and life coverage. This notice generally explains continuation coverage, when it may become available to you and your qualified dependents, and what you need to do to protect the right to receive it. This notice gives only a summary of your continuation coverage rights. For more information about your rights and obligations under the Plan and under federal law, you should either review the Plan's Summary Plan Description or get a copy of the Plan Document from the Plan Administrator. The Plan Administrator is SWWC'S Human Resources Department. The Plan Administrator is responsible for administering continuation coverage.

### **Continuation Coverage**

Continuation coverage is a continuation of Plan coverage when coverage would otherwise end because of a life event known as a "qualifying event." Specific qualifying events are listed later in this notice. Continuation coverage must be offered to each person who is a "qualified beneficiary." A qualified beneficiary is someone who will lose coverage under the Plan because of a qualifying event. Depending on the type of qualifying event, employees, spouses of employees, and dependent children of employees may be qualified beneficiaries. Under the plan, qualified beneficiaries who elect continuation coverage must pay for it.

If you are an employee, you will become a qualified beneficiary if you will lose your coverage under the Plan because either one of the following qualifying events happens:

1. Your hours of employment are reduced, or
2. Your employment ends for any reason other than your gross misconduct.

If you are the spouse of an employee, you will become a qualified beneficiary if you will lose your coverage under the Plan because of any of the following qualifying events happens:

1. Your spouse dies;
2. Your spouse's hours of employment are reduced;
3. Your spouse's employment ends for any reason other than his or her gross misconduct; or
4. You become divorced or legally separated from your spouse.

Your dependent children will become qualified beneficiaries if they will lose coverage under the Plan because



any of the following qualifying events happens:

1. The parent-employees dies;
2. The parent-employee's hours of employment are reduced;
3. The parent-employee's employment ends for any reason other than his or her gross misconduct; or
4. The child stops being eligible for coverage under the plan as a "dependent child."

Sometimes, filing a proceeding in bankruptcy under Title 11 of the United States Code can be a qualifying event. If a proceeding in bankruptcy is filed with respect to the State of Minnesota, and that bankruptcy results in a loss of coverage of any retired employee covered under the Plan, the retired employee is a qualified beneficiary with respect to the bankruptcy. The retired employee's spouse, surviving spouse, and dependent children will also be qualified beneficiaries if bankruptcy results in the loss of their coverage under the Plan.

### **When is continuation coverage available?**

The Plan will offer continuation coverage to qualified beneficiaries only after the Plan Administrator has been notified that a qualifying event has occurred. When the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of hours of employment, death of the employee, or commencement of a proceeding in bankruptcy with respect to the employer, the Plan Administrator must be notified of the qualifying event within 30 days following the date coverage ends.

### **You must give notice of some qualifying events**

For other qualifying events (divorce or legal separation of the employee and spouse or a dependent child's losing eligibility for coverage as a dependent child), you must notify the Plan Administrator. The Plan requires you to notify the Plan Administrator within 30 days after the qualifying event occurs. You must send this notice to: SWWC, Human Resources Department, 1420 East College Drive, Marshall, MN 56258.

### **How is continuation coverage provided?**

Once the Plan Administrator receives notice that a qualifying event has occurred, continuation coverage will be offered to each of the qualified beneficiaries. Each qualified beneficiary will have an independent right to elect continuation coverage. Covered employees may elect continuation on behalf of their spouses, and parents may elect continuation coverage on behalf of their children. For each qualified beneficiary who elects continuation coverage, that coverage will begin on the date that Plan coverage would otherwise have been lost.

Continuation coverage is a temporary continuation of coverage.

- When the qualifying event is a dependent child losing eligibility as a dependent child, continuation of medical coverage lasts for up to 36 months.
- When the qualifying event is the death of the employee or divorce or legal separation, continuation of medical coverage may last indefinitely.
- When the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of the employee's hours of employment, and the employee became entitled to Medicare benefits less than 18 months before the qualifying event, continuation of medical coverage for qualified beneficiaries other than the employee lasts until 36 months after the date of Medicare entitlement. For example, if a covered employee becomes entitled to Medicare 8 months before the date on which his employment terminates, continuation coverage for his spouse and children can last up to 36 months after the date of Medicare entitlement, which is equal to 28 months after the date of the qualifying event (36 months minus 8 months).
- Otherwise, when the qualifying event is the end of employment or reduction of the employee's hours of employment, continuation coverage generally lasts for only up to a total of 18 months. This 18-month period of continuation coverage can be extended if a second qualifying event occurs.

## Second qualifying events

1. Extension of 18-month period of continuation coverage – If your family experiences another qualifying event while receiving 18 months of continuation coverage, the spouse and dependent children in your family can get additional months of health continuation coverage, up to a combined maximum of 36 months, if notice of the second qualifying event is properly given to the Plan. This extension is available to the spouse and dependent children if the employee or former employee dies, gets divorced or legally separated, or if the dependent child stops being eligible under the Plan as a dependent child to lose coverage under the Plan had the first qualifying event not occurred. In all these cases, you must make sure that the Plan Administrator is notified of the second qualifying event within 60 days of the second qualifying event. This notice must be sent to: SWWC, 1420 East College Drive, Marshall, MN 56258.
2. Disability extension of 18-month period of continuation coverage – If you or a qualified dependent covered under the Plan is determined by the Social Security Administration to be disabled and you notify the Plan Administrator in a timely fashion, you and your qualified dependents can receive up to an additional 11 months of health continuation coverage, for a total maximum of 29 months. The disability would have to have started at some time before the 60th day of continuation coverage and must last at least until the end of the 18-month period of continuation coverage. You must make sure the Plan Administrator is notified of the Social Security Administration's determination within 60 days of the date of the determination and before the end of the 18-month period of continuation coverage. This notice should be sent to: SWWC, 1420 East College Drive, Marshall, MN 56258.

## Continuation of life insurance

For life insurance, employees have the option to continue basic life insurance in the event of termination of employment, layoff, or reduction in hours. All or any portion of the life insurance benefits in force at the time the qualifying event occurs may be continued at the employee's expense. The maximum period for continuation of life insurance is 18 months, or until covered by other group insurance, whichever is earlier.

## Continuation coverage for employees who retire or become disabled

There are special rules for employees who become disabled or who retire. In 1992, Minnesota Statute 471.61 was passed allowing some former employees and dependents of political subdivision groups to continue their employee-sponsored health coverage indefinitely. You are eligible for this continuation provision if you receive a disability benefit or an annuity from a Minnesota public pension plan (other than a volunteer firefighter plan) or have met the age and service requirements necessary to receive an annuity from a Minnesota public pension plan. If you do not meet the requirements for this provision, you are still eligible for continuation under state and federal law provisions outlined above.

Dependents are eligible for this continuation provision as long as:

- They meet the marital, financial, age and/or student eligibility requirements of a dependent as defined by the coverage.
- They were enrolled under the coverage prior to the coverage termination or were enrolled in the coverage after the termination date due to a Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) qualifying event.
- The employee remains under the continuation coverage provision.

A HIPAA qualifying event includes, but is not limited to, adoption and/or birth of a child, marriage, divorce, death, and termination of employment. If a dependent is being added due to a qualifying event, the dependent must be added within 30 days of the event.

There is no impact to this continuation provision when employees turn age 65. But if the employee discontinues group coverage in favor of a Medicare supplemental plan, the dependents are no longer eligible for continuation coverage as stated by Minnesota Statute section 471.61. Since this is a qualifying event, the dependents may be eligible for 36 months of continuation coverage under our group health plan.



**Questions**

If you have questions about your continuation coverage, you should contact the Human Resources Department, or you may contact the nearest Regional or District Office of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration (EBSA). Addresses and phone numbers of Regional and District EBSA offices are available through the EBSA website at [www.dol.gov/ebsa](http://www.dol.gov/ebsa).

**Keep Your Plan Informed of Address Changes**

In order to protect your rights and those of your qualified dependents; you should keep the Plan Administrator informed of any changes in your address and the addresses of qualified dependents. You should also keep a copy, for your records, of any notices you send to the Plan Administrator.

