



# Town of Clarkdale Employee Handbook Review

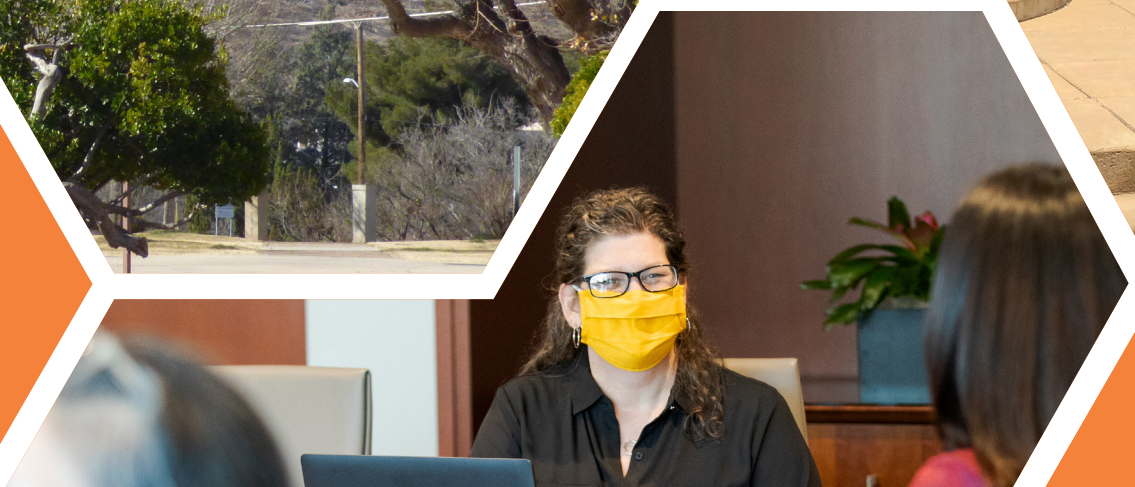


Sustainable  
Cities  
Network

Arizona State  
University

Project Cities

A Spring 2022  
Collaborative Project with  
Arizona State University's  
Project Cities & the  
Town of Clarkdale



# **PART 1:**

## **Project and Community Introduction**

**GET TO KNOW THE PROJECT**

**ABOUT ASU PROJECT CITIES**

**ABOUT THE TOWN OF CLARKDALE**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**KEY STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS**

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

*This page was intentionally left blank.*

*This report represents original work prepared for the Town of Clarkdale by students participating in courses aligned with Arizona State University's Project Cities program. Findings, information, and recommendations are those of students and are not necessarily of Arizona State University. Student reports are not peer reviewed for statistical or computational accuracy, or comprehensively fact-checked, in the same fashion as academic journal articles. Editor's notes are provided throughout the report to highlight instances where Project Cities staff, ASU faculty, municipal staff, or any other reviewer felt the need to further clarify information or comment on student conclusions. Project partners should use care when using student reports as justification for future actions. Text and images contained in this report may not be used without permission from Project Cities.*

*Cover images:*

**Town of Clarkdale  
and Project Cities**

# **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

## **Town of Clarkdale**

Robyn Prud'homme-Bauer, Mayor

Debbie Hunseder, Vice Mayor

Marney Babbitt-Pierce, Councilmember

Lisa O'Neill, Councilmember

Bill Regner, Councilmember

Susan Guthrie, Town Manager

Ruth Mayday, Community Development Department Director

## **Arizona State University (ASU)**

### **Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory**

Peter Schlosser, Vice President, Global Futures Laboratory

Meredith Simpson, Director of Operations, Global Futures Laboratory

Dave White, Director, Global Institute of Sustainability and Innovation, and Associate Vice President of Research Advancement, Knowledge Enterprise

Diane Pataki, Director, School of Sustainability

*On behalf of the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory, the Global Institute of Sustainability and Innovation, and the College of Global Futures, we extend a heartfelt thank you to the Town of Clarkdale for enthusiastically engaging with students and faculty throughout the semester. These projects provide valuable real-world experience for our students and we hope that their perspectives shine light on opportunities to continuously improve Clarkdale's future livelihood and community well-being.*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **PART 1** GET ACQUAINTED WITH THE PROJECT

- 4 Acknowledgments
- 6 About Project Cities
- 7 About Clarkdale
- 8 Foreword From Town of Clarkdale Leadership
- 9 Clarkdale Community Profile
- 13 Map of Partner Communities in Arizona
- 15 Executive Summary
- 16 Key Student Recommendations
- 18 Sustainable Development Goal Alignment

## **PART 2** PERSONNEL LEAVE AND ADA POLICY

- 23 Introduction
- 32 Findings and Analysis
- 38 Recommendations
- 40 References

## **PART 3** TERMINATION, APPEALS, & PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

- 47 Introduction
- 55 Findings and Analysis
- 67 Recommendations
- 70 References

## **PART 4** PROBATIONARY PERIOD & EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

- 75 Introduction
- 82 Findings and Analysis
- 88 Recommendations
- 90 References

## **PART 5** COMPUTER, EMAIL, & CONFIDENTIALITY POLICIES

- 95 Introduction
- 101 Findings and Analysis
- 105 Recommendations
- 107 References

*To access the original student reports, additional materials, and resources, visit:*  
[links.asu.edu/PCClarkdaleEmployeeHandbook22S](https://links.asu.edu/PCClarkdaleEmployeeHandbook22S)

## ABOUT PROJECT CITIES

The ASU Project Cities program uses an innovative, new approach to traditional university-community partnerships. Through a curated relationship over the course of an academic year, selected community partners work with Project Cities faculty and students to co-create strategies for better environmental, economic, and social balance in the places we call home. Students from multiple disciplines research difficult challenges chosen by the city and propose innovative sustainable solutions in consultation with city staff. This is a win-win partnership, which also allows students to reinforce classroom learning and practice professional skills in a real-world client-based project. Project Cities is a member of Educational Partnerships for Innovation in Communities Network (EPIC-N), a growing coalition of more than 35 educational institutions partnering with local government agencies across the United States and around the world.

## ABOUT SUSTAINABLE CITIES NETWORK

Project Cities is a program of ASU's Sustainable Cities Network. This network was founded in 2008 to support communities in sharing knowledge and coordinating efforts to understand and solve sustainability problems. It is designed to foster partnerships, identify best practices, provide training and information, and connect ASU's research to front-line challenges facing local communities. Network members come from Arizona cities, towns, counties, and Native American communities, and cover a broad range of professional disciplines. Together, these members work to create a more sustainable region and state. In 2012, the network was awarded the Pacific Southwest Region's 2012 Green Government Award by the U.S. EPA for its efforts. For more information, visit [sustainablecities.asu.edu](http://sustainablecities.asu.edu).

### PROJECT CITIES TEAM

#### Director

Anne Reichman  
anne.reichman@asu.edu  
480-965-2168

#### Program Manager

Julia Colbert  
julia.k.colbert@asu.edu  
602-543-1218

#### Graphic Design & Communications Assistant

Shraddha Bejgam, Master of Science in User Experience

#### SCN Program Assistant

Catelyn Nieves, Bachelor of Arts in Sustainability

#### Project Cities Program Assistant

Alison Almand, Master of Science in Community Resources and Development

**ASU** Sustainable Cities Network  
Arizona State University

Project Cities



## **ABOUT CLARKDALE**

The Town of Clarkdale, Arizona is located on the banks of the Verde River in the north central part of Arizona. It is a thriving community and is the gateway to the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Area in the beautiful Verde Valley. Founded in 1912, Clarkdale is renowned as the first master-planned community in the state of Arizona and was developed with a "Live, work, play" ideology intended to provide its residents with a wholesome living experience. Clarkdale has just over 4,400 residents who thrive in the fresh, clean air of the Verde Valley.

## **CLARKDALE TEAM**

### **Project Cities Community Liaison**

Ruth Mayday, Community Development Department Director

### **Spring 2022 Clarkdale Project Leads**

Randi Stephens, Human Resources Manager

Ruth Mayday, Community Development Department Director

Susan Guthrie, Town Manager



---

*Celebrating historic charm. Creating a prosperous future.*

[clarkdale.az.gov](http://clarkdale.az.gov)





# Town of Clarkdale

Post Office Box 308  
Clarkdale, AZ 86324  
Telephone: (928) 639-2400  
Fax: (928-639-2400)

March 30, 2022

Dear Town of Clarkdale Residents :

On behalf of the Town Council and the Town of Clarkdale, we would like to express our appreciation to all who have been involved with the ASU Sustainable Cities Project. Over the past two years, the Town has been fortunate to work with nearly 100 students across disciplines to develop strategies for improving the lives of Clarkdale residents. Their efforts support the work of Town staff and is vital to the planning and development of a Clarkdale that will meet the needs of all its residents.

Our continued partnership is important to the Town of Clarkdale. Because we are a small town with a small staff, our capacity to research and produce in-depth documents is limited; the ability to work with the students and faculty at ASU provides us with the expertise we need to accomplish our goals for our community, while providing the students with hands-on, documentable experience in the public sector.

The Town of Clarkdale looks forward to our continued collaboration with Sustainable Cities Program and another successful year with the students at ASU.

Sincerely,

Robyn Prudhomme-Bauer, Mayor

Susan Guthrie, Town Manger

# Clarkdale, Arizona



Proud partner of

**ASU** Sustainable Cities  
Network  
Arizona State University

Project Cities

*Verde River at Box Canyon*

## Demographics

total population: **4,424**

**36% of residents are over the age of 65**

median age: **56.27**

**78% of residents are homeowners**

**67.1% of the population has some college education, 31.75% are college graduates**

median yearly income: **\$45,304**

## Schools

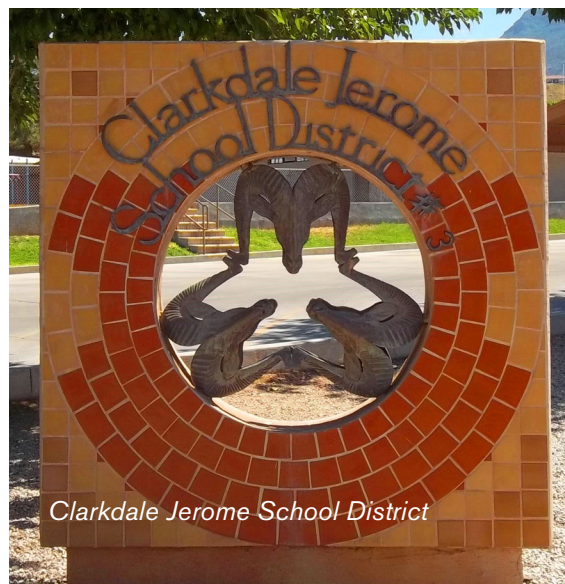
Clarkdale is home to the Yavapai College Verde Campus and the Small Business Development Center. Yavapai College has one of the leading viticulture and enology schools in the Southwest. High school students in Clarkdale attend Mingus Union High School, and the Clarkdale-Jerome Elementary School boasts an excellent reputation for educating students from Kindergarten through 8th grade.

## Sustainability

In Clarkdale's 2013 General Plan, the City identified four main sustainability objectives: **water use, ecological design, sustainable construction** and **mixed use development**. In 2019, Clarkdale announced its partnership with ASU's Project Cities to enliven the Central Business District with a sustainability orientation.



*Clarkdale Park*



*Clarkdale Jerome School District*



*Tuzigoot National Monument*

# History

The Town of Clarkdale is located on the banks of the Verde River in the north central part of Arizona. It is a thriving community and is the gateway to the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Area in the beautiful Verde Valley. Founded in 1912, Clarkdale is renowned as the first master planned community in the State of Arizona. The town was founded to house the employees of the smelter in Clarkdale, as well as the mine workers from Jerome. Ahead of its time, Clarkdale boasted underground utilities, sewers, paved streets, stylish homes and a thriving commercial center.

The main town site was located on a ridge overlooking the industrial smelter complex and was developed with residential homes, including upper and lower-income housing, a commercial

area, an administrative center, schools, recreational and cultural facilities, and parks. They intended to include all the parts typically found in a small town within a comprehensive planned design. Today, the original town site of Clarkdale is recognized as a Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places.

The original rail line that served the smelter is now host to a scenic excursion train, the Verde Canyon Railroad, which allows travelers a four-hour round trip to view the protected ecosystem of the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness Area and Verde River firsthand. In addition to the excursion branch, the Arizona Central Railroad (the parent company of the Verde Canyon Railroad) ships materials by rail to Salt River Materials Group, a local cement manufacturer.



*Verde Canyon Railroad*

# Attractions

Hop aboard the Verde Canyon

Railroad for the longest-running nature show along the Verde River. Spot bald eagles and enjoy an array of special events onboard throughout the year. Experience the Arizona Copper Art Museum housed in the restored Clarkdale High School with its dazzling array of thousands of gorgeous copper artifacts (some of which you can touch). Float the Verde River with experienced

local river outfitters and enjoy unspoiled riparian areas adjacent to the Audubon Important Birding Area in Tavasci Marsh. Dance the night away every weekend to live music. Explore the Tuzigoot National Monument featuring the ruins of an ancient Sinagua Indian pueblo. Savor local terroir at Clarkdale's wineries, the Chateau Tumbleweed tasting room and winery or the Southwest Wine Center in the heart of Yavapai College's Verde Campus in Clarkdale.

# Downtown Business District



*Downtown Business District*

The historic Downtown Business District boasts many treasured historic assets and is the center of Clarkdale's government, cultural and historic core. The Town and downtown-area business owners have invested heavily to keep the town core thriving. As of 2019, there are four vacant properties in the Business District that pose opportunities for redevelopment, including a former grocery store, apartments, and the old

Grand Theatre. \$1.5 million in streetscape improvements in the Downtown Business District were completed in March 2005.

## Clarkdale revitalization plan

1. Develop a strategy to **encourage public and private investment**
2. Produce a **report of building conditions** including a revitalization plan for each building, cost estimates on the repairs and possible funding sources
3. Develop a **parking, pedestrian and bicycle connection plan**
4. Identify creative use of existing spaces to **promote foot traffic** in the area

## Business Highlights

- Clarkdale has 83 businesses
- Workforce is composed of 45% blue collar; 54% white collar
- 90% of businesses have less than 20 employees
- Annual events, such as Clarktoberfest, the Car Show, wine festivals, and multiple block parties, are anchored in the historic business district



*Historic Downtown Mainstreet*

## Leading industries as of 2019

Public Administration



167 Jobs

Education



110 Jobs

Information



108 Jobs

Transportation & Warehousing



87 Jobs



*Kayaking on the Verde River*

## Local ecology

The Verde River bisects the north portion of Clarkdale at a low elevation of around 3,300 feet. The west side of the town boundary is located along the foothills of Mingus Mountain in the Black Hills Range at a high elevation of approximately 4,600 feet above sea level. On the northeast border of Clarkdale, the National Park service operates the 42-acre Tuzigoot National Monument, an 800-year-old Sinagua pueblo, which is surrounded by hiking trails and hosts a complete museum. Tavasci Marsh borders Tuzigoot National Monument and has been designated as an Important Birding Area by the North American Audubon Society. Arizona State Parks also manages the Tuzigoot River Access Point along the Verde River in Clarkdale. The town is surrounded by the Prescott National Forest to the west and the Coconino National Forest to the east. In addition, trust lands of the Yavapai-Apache Nation are located within the town boundary.



*Local wildlife*

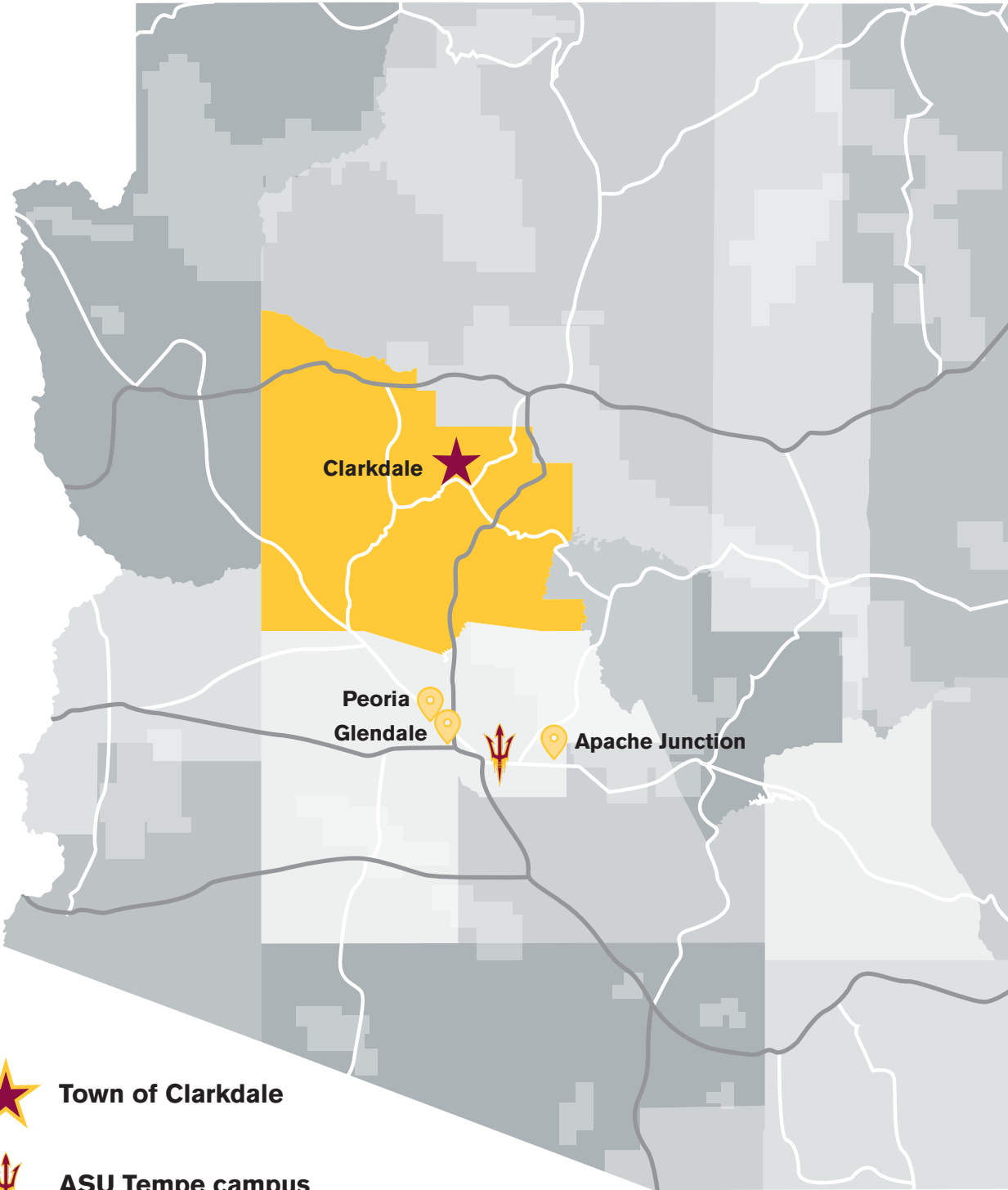


*Verde River*



*Sycamore Canyon*

# MAP OF PROJECT CITIES PARTNER COMMUNITIES IN ARIZONA



**Town of Clarkdale**



**ASU Tempe campus**



**Other Project Cities Partner Communities**



*The following report summarizes and draws highlights from work and research conducted by students in PAF 509 Public Affairs Capstone for the Spring 2022 partnership between ASU's Project Cities and the Town of Clarkdale.*

*To access the original student reports, additional materials, and resources, visit:*

[links.asu.edu/PCClarkdaleEmployeeHandbook22S](https://links.asu.edu/PCClarkdaleEmployeeHandbook22S)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As a historic community, the Town of Clarkdale has long demonstrated its commitment to providing the most cutting-edge and up-to-date amenities for its residents and employees. The Town's employee handbook, Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual, has received minor updates since its adoption in 2006. However, the employee handbook is due for a thorough review due to ever-evolving state and federal laws and a shifting professional environment.



*Figure 1 Welcome sign, by Town of Clarkdale*

Human resource management is a vital tool in facilitating a safe and efficient work environment. While the field mostly comprises policies and procedures related to hiring, disciplinary action, and strategies for employee retention, the field is also a strategic approach to employer-employee management. In a growing body of literature related to best human resource practices, there is an increasing demand for reevaluating existing policies related to employee leave, disciplinary action, and rapidly changing state and federal mandates. These challenges are particularly pertinent in Arizona communities with the recent passage of Prop 207, which legalized recreational marijuana usage.

Four graduate students from Malcolm Goggin and LaDawn Lingard's **PAF 509: Public Affairs Capstone** course each picked several sections from Clarkdale's employee handbook to review. Each student conducted an extensive literature review of human resource practices and identified peer communities to review their employee handbooks. Following the review, students recommended policy improvements for Clarkdale's handbook.



## KEY STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for general handbook updates	Read more
Regularly update the handbook to comply with state and federal standards and identify when updates and revisions are made.	pp.79-80, 89
Develop a public use database for the Town's website to increase accessible and transparent information about the town's employee practices.	pp.101, 103-105
Create a comprehensive list of definitions used in the handbook that is subject to the institution's discretion. Clearly defined language can provide clarity and transparency to Town employees regarding its policies.	pp.59-60, 67-68, 101-102, 105

Recommendations for employee benefits and reviews	Read more
Reconsider the use of the probationary period to describe the period of adjustment. Instead, this period can be referred to as the introductory period, orientation period, or "at-will" employment.	pp.83-84, 88
Clearly define what benefits employees are entitled to and reorganize the benefits into a comprehensive section.	pp.85-86, 83-86, 88
Expand on the existing termination policies to include a policy for rehiring past employees.	pp.67
Develop an employment verification policy to comply with federal law.	pp.57, 67
Include a Town philosophy statement or actionable goals for employees to review in preparation for their evaluations. Clearly expand on the existing performance evaluation policies to inform employees how to prepare properly for their evaluation.	pp.64, 68

# KEY STUDENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for disciplinary action	Read more
Consider a positive and progressive disciplinary model, which calls for a collaboration between supervisors and employees to co-create a compliance plan.	pp.60, 67
Expand on the existing appeals process, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a more clear timeline for the appeals process</li> <li>▪ Clearly define who is eligible for the appeals process, including what employees can do in the appeals process</li> <li>▪ Develop a comprehensive section for the appeals process so that all relevant information is in one policy section</li> </ul>	pp.60-63, 68
Redevelop the Town's disciplinary action policies, including formally identifying common or mutually causes for disciplinary action.	pp.58-60, 68
Develop structured and mandatory harassment training for employees at all levels.	pp.62-64
Expand on the definitions of various communication systems like social media and equipment.	pp.101-105

Recommendations for employee wellness (leave and ADA compliance policies)	Read more
Develop a new policy to comply with the recent legalization of marijuana in Arizona. The policy should include which positions are exempt from the policy, such as police officer, firefighter/EMT, and positions that require a Commercial Driver's License.	pp.86-89,
Refer to the City of Oro Valley's sick leave policies to improve Clarkdale's clarity and organization for Clarkdale's sick leave policies.	pp.26-30, 34-37
Refer to the City of Surprise and Town of Gilbert's Military Leave, Civic Duty, and Unpaid Leaves of Absence.	pp.34-37
Consult with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) policy to expand on the town's existing confidentiality policies.	pp.103-105
Consult with the City of Scottsdale's FMLA and Short-Term Disability Procedures to restructure Clarkdale's disability accommodations.	pp.27-28, 34-35, 16-17

# TOWN OF CLARKDALE PROJECTS: ALIGNMENT WITH THE UNITED NATIONS'

# SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

As the leading international framework for sustainable decision-making, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) lay out a path for partnerships toward global peace and prosperity. The SDGs provide a set of goals and metrics for project impact to be measured, offering an illustration of the benefits experienced by the cities, towns, and students who participate in a Project Cities partnership. For details on the SDGs, visit [sdgs.un.org/goals](https://sdgs.un.org/goals)



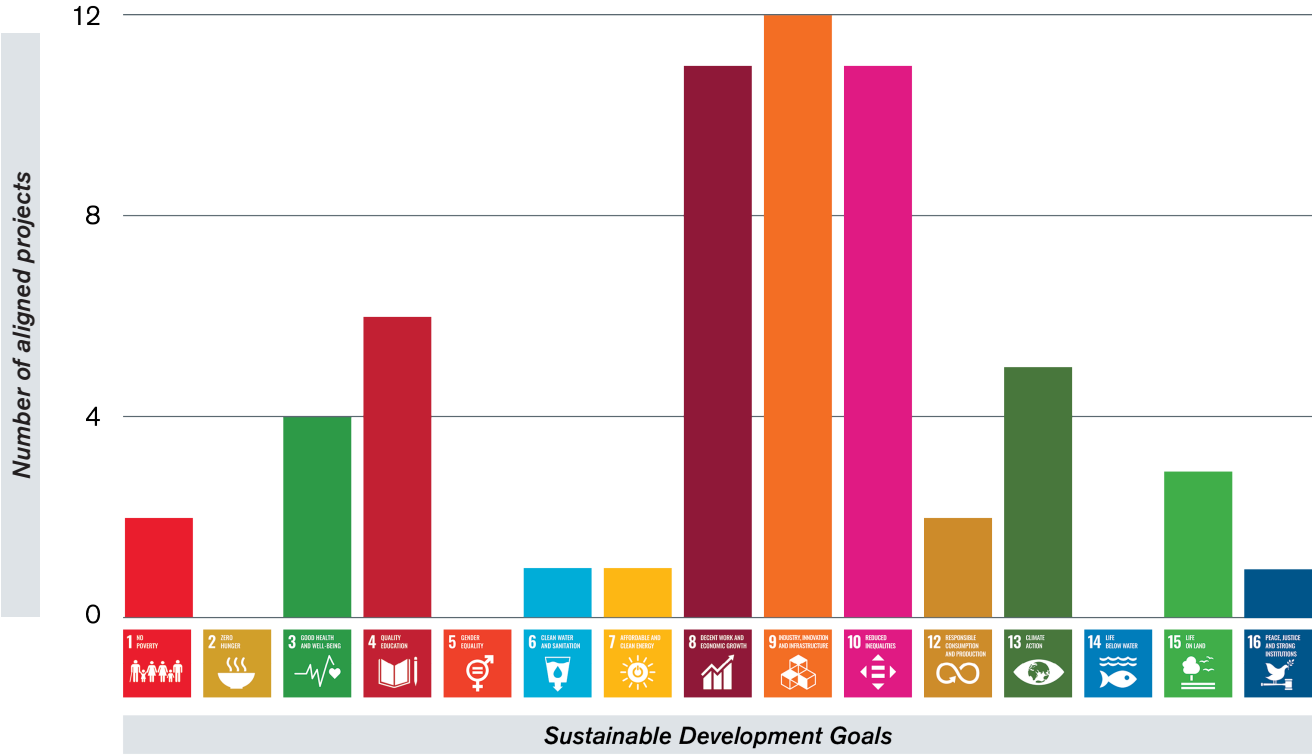
11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Every project in the PC program aligns with SDGs 11 and 17.

The figure below illustrates SDG project alignment throughout the Town of Clarkdale's partnership with Project Cities, through the spring 2022 semester.



# TOP THREE GOALS ADDRESSED IN THE FOLLOWING REPORT

Though not often considered a key element to sustainable development, human resources in small- to medium-sized communities are critical to ensuring community well-being. Updating the Town of Clarkdale's Employee Handbook provides opportunities for the community to recruit and retain high-quality employees to better serve residents and visitors.



## **Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth**

*"Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all."*

Updating the handbook ensures Town employees are provided with equitable opportunities & pathways to continued growth and success.



## **Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**

*"Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable."*

Creating a positive environment for Town employees directly impacts quality of life for Clarkdale residents and visitors.



## **Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions**

*"Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels."*

Human resources are critical in ensuring sustainable development especially in small communities.

*This page was intentionally left blank.*

# **PART 2:**

## **Personnel Leave and ADA Policy**

**CLARIFYING PERSONNEL EXPECTATIONS AND ESTABLISHING  
ACCESSIBILITY POLICIES FOR AN EQUITABLE WORKPLACE**

**PAF 509: PUBLIC AFFAIRS CAPSTONE**

**SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

**FACULTY: MALCOLM GOGGIN &  
LADAWN LINGARD**

**CAPSTONE STUDENT: KATY  
HENDRICKS**

# **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

## **Faculty**

Malcolm Goggin

LaDawn Lingard

## **Students**

Gabriel Alvarez

Callie West

Katy Hendricks

Sasha Thomas

## **Editors**

Alison Almand

Shraddha Bejgam

Julia Colbert

Anne Reichman

## **Clarkdale Staff Team**

Randi Stephens

# INTRODUCTION

Public Human Resource Management (PHRM) is a dynamic, fast-evolving, yet vital practice in the public sector (Berman et al., 2021). While the need to manage employees and foster employee-employer relationships have always been an ever-present reality within the public sector, the authentic practice of PHRM has only truly taken hold in the past few decades (Battaglio & Jordan, 2013). With increasing research and interest in the field comes new best practices and ways to adjust existing human resource procedures to fit within the scope of public management (Boselie et al., 2019). While research and best practices have started to gain steam within public sector research spaces, there is still much debate on how to enact these practices and subsequently determine if these practices genuinely fit the unique needs of the public sector (Brown, 2004).



*Figure 1 HRM functions diagram, adapted from HRM exam*

Additionally, there are areas of human resource management across both the public and private sectors that are only just starting to generate specific research. One of these areas is best practices for developing employee handbooks that are equitable to the needs of both employees and employers, especially in the ever-changing world of employment law (McCabe, 2015). Besides meeting the basic standards of employment law, there often is ambiguity around addressing new issues that face the workplace, such as procedures surrounding COVID-19.

Additionally, older, more outdated standards are being questioned, like strict dress code rules that specifically target women in the workplace (Sami & Roychowdhury, 2021; Ertekin, 2022). The importance of a clear, concise, and fair handbook is of the utmost importance within a workplace to ensure employees understand what is expected of them from their employer. However, in order to expect employee compliance, employers must make sure they are taking into account the needs of employees when crafting organizational policies and procedures (McCabe, 2015).



## **Project scope**

The Town of Clarkdale, Arizona, is looking to bring its outdated employee handbook up to date. A small, former mining town hosting a population of roughly 4,400 residents, Clarkdale hired its first full-time Human Resources Director this past year. Randi Stephens, Clarkdale's Human Resources Director and Risk Manager, is working to bring the F's Personnel Policies and Procedure Manual into compliance with state and federal law. The handbook was originally adopted in 2006 and was last amended in 2017.

Due to recent changes in state and federal law since the handbook was last amended, the handbook needs to be reviewed for legal compliance. Additionally, Stephens is looking to create an innovative manual that explores new trends within PHRM and addresses new challenges to the workplace, such as COVID-19 and the recent legalization of recreational marijuana. The goal of this capstone is twofold: first, assist in editing and updating the handbook in order to meet the needs of the Town of Clarkdale, and secondly, conduct research justifying these changes to the handbook in accordance with general PHRM best practices.

## **Research questions**

To achieve these goals, an ASU student research team collaborated with the Town to create specific research questions. The questions to be addressed in this paper are as follows:

1. Which sections of the Clarkdale Employee Handbook are outdated and out of compliance with state and federal laws?
2. How can these outdated sections be updated according to empirical best practices to ensure the handbook meets compliance guidelines while also meeting the needs of city employees?
3. What other cities in Arizona have performed similar handbook updates? How can the Town of Clarkdale use this information to best update its handbook?
4. What best practices in HR policy have been identified with empirical literature that can be implemented in the Town of Clarkdale?

In the following sections, the literature surrounding human resource management research and procedures will be explored, with a specific emphasis on employee leave and ADA policy and the methodology surrounding this specific project.

## **Literature review**

The field of Public Human Resource Management has recently gained traction in public sector research spaces. The idea of employee handbook best practices for the modern era has begun to inspire research. This literature review will primarily focus on advancements

within PHRM, research on employee handbooks conducted on a broader, general human resources scale, and, more specifically, analysis of literature surrounding both personnel leave and ADA policy.

## **Overview of Public Human Resource Management**

Public Human Resource Management (PHRM) is a quickly growing field of research within public administration circles. However, this was not always the case. Human resources practices in the public sector were originally grouped into private sector human resource management (HRM) as a collective whole. When HRM first started to gain traction, it was regarded as a significant breakaway from the traditional “rule-bound” culture that human resources had always adhered to and thereafter exhibited a move towards a more performance-based culture (Brunetto & Beattie, 2019). This transition was slow and tedious but led to significant breakthroughs in the field. HRM emphasized a relationship model between employer and employee, gaining a new emphasis on employee skill development, career progression, compensations, rewards, and employment conditions (Brown, 2004). PHRM took to this idea of “soft” HRM rather quickly, now characterizing itself by its more flexible structures and adherence to flatter management structures (Brown, 2004).

### ***Soft skills development***

When HRM practices began to be more widely accepted in the public sector spaces, there was a shift within PHRM to facilitate growth in its employees' soft skills development. Long focusing on developing hard skills, like education and training, soft skills focus more heavily on the development of interpersonal relationships and self-improvement (Battaglio, 2020). This shift in focus has been overwhelmingly supported within PHRM circles. In a survey conducted by The Volcker Alliance (2018), 75% of respondents answered that commitment was an essential soft skill for a high-performance government, and 71% answered that motivation was also essential to success (The Volcker Alliance, 2018). With the constantly changing demographics the public sector has to serve, the development of these skills has been of great benefit to the future of PHRM (Brunetto & Beattie, 2019).

## **Further research on the development and differences of HRM and PHRM**

However, even with the adoption and subsequent shifts within PHRM, it remains a significantly under-researched discipline, especially in comparison to HRM in the private sector (Brunetto & Beattie, 2019). HRM and PHRM are not interchangeable and certainly not a one-size-fits-all solution to human resources issues within the public sector (Boselie, Van Harten & Veld, 2019). One major difference lies in the scope of stakeholders served by each organization. While a private sector business may serve a limited scope of stakeholders, public sector organizations must consider multiple parties, such as voters, the national government, elected members, professional organizations, trade unions, the wider public, etc. (Brunetto & Beattie, 2019). Besides major differences, long-accepted private sector HRM practices simply do not perform well in the public sector. A common example

of this is pay-for-performance practices. While they have merit in the private sector, they have no or even negative significance for the performance of public sector employees due to institutional constraints on the public sector that the private sector does not ever confront (Jordan & Battaglio, 2013). There is a significant need for additional empirical research in PHRM to assist the discipline in holding its own in the face of HRM.

However, this does not mean that all practices from HRM do not apply to PHRM. In fact, research dictates that both disciplines can benefit from a “cross-pollination” of sorts. In research conducted by Boselie et al. (2019), a majority of the benefits of HRM have been researched through a private sector lens. However, PHRM research can benefit from HRM research and vice versa. The two become more closely integrated and work together to develop greater theories based on the complexities that public sector organizations bring to the overall study of HRM.

### **Relevant HRM & PHRM issues today**

It has been established that HRM and PHRM have similarities and differences that must be taken into account when analyzing them. An area of common similarities falls within topical issues that face the workplace. With both private and public sector employees bound to state and federal employment law and societal changes, many major issues plague both sectors.

#### ***COVID-19 policies***

One of the major issues employers face today is the policies and practices surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has disrupted the way of life of billions across the globe, and organizations had to be quick to adapt to the crisis (Zhong, Li, Ding & Liao, 2021). Employers had to adapt, in many cases, to a work-from-home setting, relying heavily on technology to connect employees. Employee engagement had to be creative in order to continue organizational execution away from a collaborative workplace (Chanana, 2020). Additionally, workers suffered from emotional exhaustion and job insecurity in the face of such an unpredictable event (Chen & Eyoun, 2021). With the pandemic moving through new waves, companies must continually adjust to the “new normal” (Hamouche, 2021). For example, companies must decide on policy for remote work, vaccination requirements, mask requirements, and how these will fluctuate based on the rise and fall of COVID-19 cases (Hamouche, 2021).

#### ***Gender equity***

Another issue facing HRM is gender equity in the workplace. While many instances of HRM policy could be applied to this overarching issue, a significant conversation centers around dress codes in the workplace. Company dress codes often unfairly target women and are held to much higher standards than their male counterparts (Tastad & Bass, 2020). Women are beginning to speak out against this long-existing issue as the conversation around Women’s Rights has entered the mainstream (Ertekin, 2022).



*Figure 2 Attendees of a SHRM conference, by Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)*

### **Employee handbooks**

Understanding the history of HRM, the growth of PHRM, and the emergence of new issues that companies continue to face highlights the need for a comprehensive employee handbook. There is very little literature surrounding new trends for employee handbooks. However, the existing research emphasizes the importance of creating a handbook that is clear, concise, and fair to the personnel it services (McCabe, 2015). Employee handbooks should be clear with little room for misinterpretation, relevant to the employees, and created with the organization's needs in mind (Lopatka, 2014).

### **Personnel leaves**

A clear personnel leave policy is an essential aspect of every employee handbook. While personnel leave is a right granted to employees, it can be an organizational challenge to carry it out efficiently and effectively. The forms of leave discussed in this project's scope are the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), sick leave, and maternity/parental leave. The Family Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) was a piece of national labor law policy signed by President Bill Clinton, requiring employers to provide employees with job-protected, unpaid leave for qualified medical and family reasons (U.S. Department of Labor, 2022). Common examples of qualified reasons for leave are to care for a new child, care for a seriously ill family member, or recover from a serious illness. Employees eligible to take FMLA leave can take up to 12 workweeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period. The FMLA covers both public and private sector employees but excludes employees in certain categories, such as highly compensated employees or elected officials.

To be eligible for FMLA leave, an employee must have worked for their current employer for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours within those past 12 months (U.S. Department of Labor, 2022). Employers covered by the FMLA are private-sector employers with 50 or more employees in 20 or more workweeks in the current or preceding calendar year; public agencies of all types, regardless of the number of employees; and public or private elementary or secondary schools, regardless of the number of employees (U.S. Department of Labor, 2012).

If possible, employees must give at least a 30-day notice to their employer in case of a “foreseeable” birth, adoption, or serious health condition. Additionally, employees must seek to claim the FMLA act and have a certification with their employer processed, proving that their absence is verified. Employers are legally not able to reject the application of the FMLA to any FMLA-qualifying absences. Once an employee takes FMLA leave, they are protected for up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave. During this time, the employee’s job is protected, and their employer must provide benefits (U.S. Department of Labor, 2022).

### ***Paid sick leave***

Access to paid sick leave is a hotly contested debate in both the public and private sectors. Within the scope of developed nations, the United States is one of few that still does not provide universal access to paid sick leave (Pichler et al., 2021; Schliwen et al., 2011). The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is one of the only pieces of federal legislation offering unpaid leave, and this leave is only accessible to employees who have been employed with their employer for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours in those 12 months (U.S. Department of Labor, 2022).

While this is the only federal legislation, many states have passed their own paid sick leave mandates since the passing of the FMLA in 1993. In Arizona, Proposition 206, or the Fair Wages and Healthy Families Act, mandates that all Arizona employers grant employees paid sick time accrual starting on their first day of employment. In this context, employers are defined as “a corporation, proprietorship, partnership, joint venture, limited liability company, trust, association, political subdivision of the State, individual or other entity acting directly or indirectly in the interest of an employer in relation to an employee” (Industrial Commission of Arizona, 2021, p. 1). Employees can use this sick leave for personal or family care in the event of physical or mental illness, injury, communicable disease exposure, or events of domestic or sexual violence, abuse, or stalking (Industrial Commission of Arizona, 2021). The only exceptions to this law are employees employed by the Arizona State government, the Federal government, and sole proprietors (Industrial Commission of Arizona, 2021).

Employees working for the State of Arizona are subject to paid sick time policies dictated by their respective municipalities. For example, the City of Phoenix grants full-time regular employees 10 hours of paid sick leave a month with no maximum accrual ceiling, while the

City of Scottsdale grants full-time regular employees and probationary employees eight hours of medical leave a month based on a universal benefit date (City of Phoenix, 2022; City of Scottsdale, 2022). Federal employees operate under the jurisdiction of Federal law, which grants full-time employees four hours of paid sick time per each bi-weekly pay period (U.S. Office of Personnel Management, 2022).

Even with paid sick leave policies gaining traction, especially considering the COVID-19 pandemic, there are still debates within the HRM and PHRM world on how to implement them, if at all. Specifically focusing on PHRM, a major area of concern surrounding these policies is absenteeism. Public sector employees are more likely to take sick time than their private sector counterparts. In 2007, it was reported that the use of sick time within the public sector was 41% higher than in the private sector (De Paola et al., 2014). However, new research shows that employees and employers both benefit through access to sick pay and that productivity increases, and employees working while sick decreases (Schneider, 2020; Kuoppala et al., 2011; Pichler et al., 2021). Even with these new developments in sick pay research, the idea itself is largely unregulated, especially at the federal level.

### ***Maternity, parental leave, and paid family leave***

Maternity leave, and more recently, a more general parental leave for both new parents is another form of leave gaining traction in HRM and PHRM circles. While parental leave is not new, there is no federal legislation offering paid leave for new parents. As of now, the FMLA is the only job-protected leave surrounding the birth or adoption of a new child, and this leave is unpaid. Thus, the United States is the only developed nation without federal paid family and medical leave (PFML) legislation (Mohr & Anderson, 2021). Individual U.S. states also reflect this lack of policy, with only nine states currently enacting PFML legislation (Williams & Scott, 2022). These laws vary vastly from state to state and are not subject to any higher regulation. Arizona is not included among these nine states.

Even with the absence of paid family leave policies in the U.S., HRM researchers are looking to Europe and Canada for case studies on the effectiveness of paid leave policies on employee wellbeing (Dahl et al., 2016). In 2000, the World Health Organization concluded that women need at least 16 weeks postpartum away from work after the birth of a child to heal and bond with their child (World Health Organization, 2019). In another study containing aggregate data over 25 years in 16 European countries offering paid parental leave, it was discovered that longer paid leaves lead to overall increased child health and a decrease in post-neonatal and child fatalities (Ruhm, 2000). Additionally, in a study performed in Canada, it was found that women who are offered paid leave are more likely to continue their employment with their pre-birth employers (Baker & Milligan, 2008).

With more working parents pushing for paid family leave, the number of employers offering paid leave is higher than ever. Of employers in the U.S., 55% offer paid maternity leave,

45% offer paid paternity leave, and 35% provide paid extended family care leave (Oxford Economics & SHRM, 2020). Additionally, companies that offer these benefits are seeing a significant increase in their ability to attract and retain talent, with companies seeing a 58% and 55% increase (Oxford Economics & SHRM, 2020). However, in the public sector, access to paid family leave of any kind is rare and only consistently available in the nine U.S. states with PFML policy (Williams & Scott, 2022).

### **ADA compliance**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), as well as the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA), are a set of federal laws enacted to accommodate and prevent discrimination against people with disabilities (U.S. Department of Labor, 2022). Regarding employment, the laws are set with the intent to protect employees and job applicants with disabilities from discrimination, as well as to support employees and job applicants in seeking relevant accommodations from an employer so they can perform the essential functions of the position (SHRM, 2018). ADA laws impact all employers with 15 or more employees.

Under the ADA, disability is defined as “either a physical or a mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities” (Rush, 2012). Under the original ADA, it was often difficult to qualify as disabled, even with the presence of a disability. The ADAAA amendments adjusted the terms to its current definition and made it easier to qualify as disabled and seek protection under the ADA (Emens, 2012). Additionally, the early employees under the ADA were often met with employers who failed to offer the needed accommodations. The ADA treated this failure of compliance as a different and less severe bias rather than outright discrimination. The ADAAA's shift in definition helped combat this by asserting the importance of accommodations as a direct response to employees with disabilities and that denying or ignoring these accommodations shows the same amount of bias as direct discrimination (Emens, 2012).

While the ADA and subsequent ADAAA have created huge strides towards equality for disabled and non-disabled employees, there are still substantial areas in which the laws fail to advocate for disabled employees. For example, there was a sharp drop in employment of disabled workers after the ADA went into effect, with the ADA itself being a likely cause (Acemoglu & Angrist, 2001). Additionally, negative bias surrounding disabled employees and a general lack of understanding by the general populace around disability accommodations are also major contributors to the lack of effectiveness of the ADA (Blanck, 1999). With this lack of education and fearmongering surrounding the ADA's possible financial repercussions on employers, the ADA and those protected under it are forced to fight an uphill battle within working America (Collins, 1992).

Overall, the literature demonstrates three major themes pertinent to this project. First, PHRM is quickly gaining traction in the public sector. Once an ignored part of public sector

operations and research, scholars have determined the importance of dedicated HR studies within the public sector and the sector's nuance to traditional HR practices. **Second, scholars have noted the growing discussion surrounding paid employee leave regarding sick and family leave. The increase in focus is linked to a growing desire for talent attraction and retention and the emergence of this policy in other developed nations.** Lastly, research has suggested the need for a more comprehensive ADA policy. With the criticisms surrounding both the ADA and the subsequent ADAA, it is becoming apparent that employers need to consider how they approach, present, and enforce ADA policy to employees to support employees with disabilities.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Research questions employed for this project include:

1. Which sections of the Clarkdale Employee Handbook are outdated and out of compliance with state and federal laws?
2. How can these outdated sections be updated according to empirical best practices in a way that ensures the handbook meets compliance guidelines while also meeting the needs of city employees?
3. What other cities in Arizona have performed similar handbook updates? How can the Town of Clarkdale use this information to best update its own handbook?
4. What best practices in HR policy have been identified with empirical literature that can be implemented in the Town of Clarkdale?

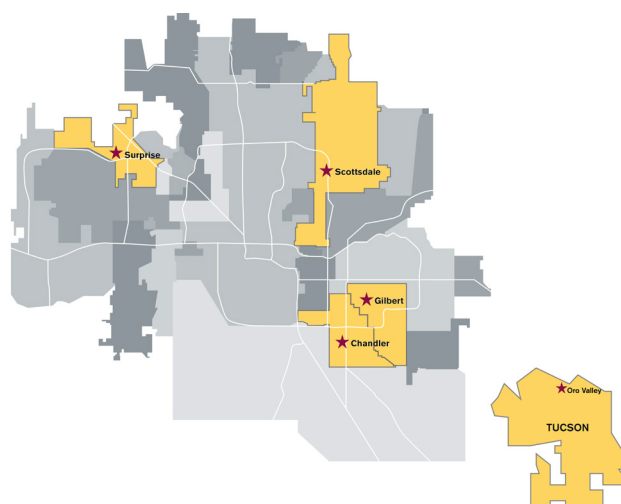
This study will employ a qualitative research approach, using observations from neighboring towns' and cities' respective handbooks and additional research on specific topics requested by the Town. By observing peer employee handbooks, the Town of Clarkdale can hold a more comprehensive view of the HR landscape around them, especially as they have been without a full-time HR Director for many years. Having qualitative data from surrounding municipalities will provide a basis for making decisions on edits and justification for edits they decide to pursue.

One of the main threats to this project is interpretation validity within these methods. As these policy recommendations are formed on a combination of law and personal determination of best practice, understanding how these recommendations were crafted is essential to the validity and overall efficacy of the recommendations. To combat interpretation validity, multiple handbooks were consulted before the policy recommendation was crafted. This assisted in giving multiple different outlooks on how the policy could be interpreted and presented to employees, greatly limiting the chance of confining oneself to a singular or narrow view on any of the policies addressed.



## FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

As the Clarkdale employee handbook is extensive, the findings in this capstone focus on the following four sections of the Handbook: Section 4 (Paid Sick Time), Section 5 (Family Medical Leave Act), Section 6 (Absent Without Leave, Jury Duty, Military Duty, and Maternity Leave), and Section 18 (ADA Employment Policy) (Town of Clarkdale, 2021, p. 3-4). The handbooks of five cities and towns in Arizona were used as guideposts for up-to-date and compliant policies. The Town of Clarkdale team specifically recommended these cities as comparative municipalities with exemplary human resources departments. Their handbooks provide employee structure that is both up to federal and state code and cutting edge in employee policy. The purpose of this forthcoming section is to give a brief background on the municipalities and their handbooks and, second, to recommend edits to the four Clarkdale handbook sections based on these reviewed handbooks.



*Figure 3 Towns and cities used as reference for the purpose of this report*

### Surprise, Arizona

The City of Surprise is located in Maricopa County, Arizona, 101 miles south of Clarkdale. The City hosts a population of 135,450 as of the 2020 U.S. Census and is the second-fastest-growing municipality in the Phoenix metropolitan area (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). The City recently updated its Employee Policy Manual (EPM), with its revised policy effective in January 2022.

### Oro Valley, Arizona

The Town of Oro Valley resides in Pima County, Arizona, located 220 miles southeast of Clarkdale. The Town hosts a population of 47,020 with a significant portion of that population retirees or seasonal visitors with second homes (Town of Oro Valley & Real Estate Consulting Group, 2020). Clarkdale also hosts a vibrant community of retirees,

creating demographical similarities between the towns. Oro Valley’s website lists all 29 of its personnel policies in individual PDF documents, with each policy stating its specific effective date.

### **Gilbert, Arizona**

The Town of Gilbert, Arizona, is located in Maricopa County, Arizona, 127 miles south of Clarkdale. The Town has a population of 243,254 and is the fifth largest municipality in Arizona and the largest incorporated town in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). Stephens and the Clarkdale team mentioned Gilbert as a town with a respected human resources manager and one with employee policies they would like to emulate. Gilbert’s Personnel Policies & Administrative Guidelines were recently updated and implemented in April 2021 (Town of Gilbert, 2021).

### **Chandler, Arizona**

The City of Chandler is located in Maricopa County, Arizona, 130 miles south of Clarkdale. The City has a population of 275,987, according to the 2020 U.S. Census (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). The City takes a similar approach to Oro Valley by hosting a webpage on the City’s government website that contains all personnel rules and policies.

### **Scottsdale, Arizona**

The City of Scottsdale, Arizona, is located in Maricopa County, Arizona, 116 miles south of Clarkdale. Scottsdale hosts a population of 241,361, with a large concentration of museums, art galleries, shops, resorts, and spas (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020; City of Scottsdale, 2022). Scottsdale hosts all employee policy information on its City website, including specific City employee values and customer service standards.

<b>Community</b>	<b>Handbook Link</b>
City of Surprise	Employee Policy Manual <a href="https://www.surpriseaz.gov/2381/Employee-Policy-Manual">https://www.surpriseaz.gov/2381/Employee-Policy-Manual</a>
Town of Oro Valley	Personnel Policies <a href="https://www.orovalleyaz.gov/Government/Departments/Human-Resources">https://www.orovalleyaz.gov/Government/Departments/Human-Resources</a>
Town of Gilbert	Personnel Policies and Administrative Guidelines <a href="https://www.gilbertaz.gov/departments/human-resources">https://www.gilbertaz.gov/departments/human-resources</a>
City of Chandler	Chandler Employee Personnel Rules <a href="https://www.chandleraz.gov/government/departments/human-resources/personnel-rules">https://www.chandleraz.gov/government/departments/human-resources/personnel-rules</a>
City of Scottsdale	Human Resources <a href="https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/hr">https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/hr</a>

## Section 4: Paid Sick Time

The Town of Clarkdale's Paid Sick Time (PST) policy is comprised of six subsections, (4.1) Definition of PST recipients, (4.2) Accrual, (4.3) Use, (4.4) Procedure, (4.5) Special Provisions, and (4.6) Paid Sick Time Accrual Schedule (Town of Clarkdale, 2021, pp. 12-14). While the Town provides basic information on how employees accrue sick time and how to use it, there is a general lack of specificity that may prove in and of itself confusing or troublesome to employees and managers.

The Town of Oro Valley's Sick Leave Request policies is an excellent example of clarity within this area. An example of this is their detailed breakdowns on what sick leave can be used for, how the employee, manager, and Town give and process sick leave requests, verifications processes for taking sick leave, and the return from work process after taking sick leave (Town of Oro Valley, 2017, pp. 3-7). Oro Valley's procedures are presented in numerical lists that give both managers and employees expectations for how sick leave is to be used and processed, with little room for confusion.

***The Town of Oro Valley's Sick Leave policy (10.2) organizes its policy into the following sections:***

- Eligibility
- Accrual of Sick Leave
- Use of Sick Leave
- Sick Leave Requests
- Verification of the Need for Sick Leave
- Return to Work
- Transfer of Unused Sick Leave
- Payment of Sick Leave Upon Termination from Town Employment

## Section 5: Family Medical Leave Act

The Town of Clarkdale's Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) policies include the following subsections: Definitions, Family and Medical Leave, Eligibility and Designation of FMLA, Use of Paid and Unpaid FMLA Leave, Reduced or Intermittent Leave, Medical Certifications, Notice Requirements, Returning to Work from FMLA Leave, Failure to Return from FMLA Leave (Town of Clarkdale, 2021, pp. 13-18). It is pertinent to note that the structure of this section diverts from the section-point-subsection (i.e., 4.1) organization method of both previous handbook sections and the handbook table of contents. The Town's FMLA policies,

while not out of compliance, lack clarity and cohesion, leading to compliance issues. The City of Scottsdale provides concise FMLA procedures and access to the City's Medical Leave of Absence Request Form, which the City requires for verifying FMLA eligibility and documentation (City of Scottsdale, 2022b). Because Scottsdale hosts a website form of employee policies instead of a traditional handbook, they separate the FMLA Procedures and Employee Rights and Responsibilities under the Family and Medical Leave Act into two distinct documents, which assist with clarity and ease of comprehension.

### **Short Term Disability**

Scottsdale also includes its Short-Term Disability policies and procedures with its FMLA policies. Short-Term Disability, for the City, offers employees with certified medical conditions paid medical leave for up to 13 weeks (City of Scottsdale, 2022b). There is no mention of short-term disability benefits or policies within the Clarkdale handbook. This could be a policy that needs to be updated within the handbook or potentially explored as an additional employee benefit.

## **Section 6: Absent Without Leave, Jury Duty, Military Duty, and Maternity Leave**

The Town of Clarkdale's Absent without Leave, Jury Duty, Military Leave, and Maternity Leave policies are divided into the following subsections: (6.1) Absent Without Leave, (6.2) Jury Duty, (6.3) Military Leave, and (6.4) Maternity Leave (Town of Clarkdale, 2021, pp. 18-19). Each subsection provides a short description of Town policies surrounding each form of leave. The Paid Sick Time policies offer a degree of ambiguity that could become problematic to employees and managers seeking further guidance on these forms of leave. Additionally, it could be pertinent to address a possible pivot to Parental Leave from Maternity Leave and discuss how other municipalities address these leaves.

The City of Surprise provides detailed and clear policies for Military Leave, Civic Duty, and Unpaid Leaves of Absence. Each section contains a policy section and a procedure section, which details relevant laws, policies, and request documents needed to apply for leave (City of Surprise, 2022, p. 130-137). The separation of policies and procedures into individual sections for each leave creates a clear idea of each policy and how employees need to go forward in pursuing them. They also contain important sections, such as non-discrimination clauses and verification procedures.

There are several notable differences between Surprise and Clarkdales' handbooks that are of note. First, the Civic Duty policy addresses Jury/Witness Duty and Voting, and Crime Victim leave (City of Surprise, 2022, p. 135). Second, there are important distinctions in the City of Surprise's Unpaid Leaves of Absence policy. This policy addresses absence without leave and absences to do with running for elected office, pursuing job-related

education/training, and ADA, FMLA, and Worker's Compensation-related leave (City of Surprise, 2022, pp. 136-137). These additional policies could help address additional leaves requested by Clarkdale employees that are currently not addressed.

### **Maternity leave**

Another major distinction between Clarkdale's handbook and many other municipalities discussed is the scope of the Town's Maternity Leave policy. In Surprise, pregnancy is a qualifying event related to the illnesses covered by the City's Paid Medical Leave Policy, which provides 75% of the employee's bi-weekly earnings for as long as determined by the City's Third Party Administer (TPA) (City of Surprise, 2022, p. 142).

"Paid Medical Leave (PML) applies to any non-occupational sickness, accidental bodily injury, or pregnancy (a qualifying event) that prevents an employee from performing one or more of the material duties of the employee's position with the City" (City of Surprise, 2022, p. 142).

A more cutting-edge example can be seen within the Town of Gilbert's Personnel Policies. Gilbert supports a Paid Parental Leave policy, which provides four consecutive weeks of paid leave for benefit-eligible employees following the birth of/or placement of a child via foster care or adoption with an employee (Town of Gilbert, 2021, p. 35). Employees are eligible for this leave if they have given birth to a child, have a spouse or committed partner who has given birth to a child, or have adopted or been placed with a child under 18. This policy runs concurrently with FMLA policies (Town of Gilbert, 2021, pp. 35-36). Although paid leave is not mandatory, providing policies like parental leave has shown significant success in recruitment and retention in the private sector (Oxford Economics & SHRM, 2020).

"The Town of Gilbert will provide up to 4 consecutive weeks of continuous paid parental leave to benefit-eligible employees following the birth of an employee's child or the placement of a child with an employee in connection with adoption or foster care. The purpose of paid parental leave is to enable the employee to care for and bond with a newborn or a newly adopted or newly placed child. This policy will run concurrently with Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave, as applicable. This policy will be in effect for births, adoptions or placements of foster children occurring on or after November 1, 2020" (Town of Gilbert, 2021, p. 35).

## **Section 18: ADA Employment Policy**

The Town of Clarkdale's ADA Employment Policy contains two subsections, (18.1) ADA Employment Policy and (18.2) ADA Internal Grievance Procedures. These sections detail Clarkdale's compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, along with procedures on how and where to submit grievances surrounding ADA policy if needed (Town of Clarkdale, 2021, pp. 34-36). Subsection 18.2 gives thorough step-by-step instructions on how and when a grievance should be filed, where to file it, and the investigation surrounding it. If still compliant, this section gives important information to employees covered by the ADA. It should be included (and updated for accuracy, if needed) in the new draft of the handbook. However, subsection 18.1 could be reworked to provide information more pertinent to an employee looking to approach and request ADA accommodations and coverage.

The City of Surprise offers a more succinct way for employees to access and understand ADA policy. The City's Employee Policy Manual includes information about ADA policy within their Anti-Discrimination policies (City of Surprise, 2022, pp. 38-43). They separate the policy and procedures regarding the ADA into two categories with information relating to both. The ADA Accommodation policy section outlines the City's compliance with the ADA, which employees qualify, and how the City makes accommodations regarding any requests (City of Surprise, 2022, pp. 41-42). The procedural section lays out more specifically how to make accommodation requests, including attachments to the Employee Request for Accommodation form and Applicant Confirmation of Accommodation request form (City of Surprise, 2022, p. 43). It then explains the procedures after the request form is submitted, how managers and employees should handle accepted accommodation requests, and directions on where to read more on grievances if needed (City of Surprise, 2022, p. 44).

Additionally, the City of Chandler's Employee Personnel Rules offers an in-depth policy document for the filing and addressing of grievance documents that may be helpful in the process of Clarkdale's editing and restructuring of their processes. Chandler's procedures explain the purpose and definition of a grievance and the time limit and steps to file the grievance. It also explains the City Manager's role, how to assemble a review committee, and the City's time for processing the grievances (City of Chandler, 2018).

The City of Surprise presents its ADA policies and procedures clearly and concisely, providing the needed steps and documents to apply for ADA accommodations within the workplace. While Clarkdale has a step-by-step process on how to submit grievances, their accommodation request procedures are much less clear. Additionally, the City of Chandler provides a document laying out all details and roles that play into a grievance request, which could serve as useful to Clarkdale as they make any edits to their processes.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## **Paid Sick Time**

Overall, the City of Oro Valley's Sick Leave personnel policies are recommended as a point of reference for rewriting the Town of Clarkdale's Paid Sick Time policies. The clarity and organization provided within the City's policies provide the essential context needed for Clarkdale employees pursuing sick leave.

## **Family Medical Leave**

Overall, the City of Scottsdale's FMLA and Short-Term Disability procedures, provide employees with clear and concise directions on how to request both forms of leave and what to expect during the process. Including the necessary request forms within the document helps ensure an increased level of employee compliance and streamlines the process for both managers and HR. Additionally, the inclusion of short-term disability benefits grants an additional option to FMLA that may benefit employees by offering pay, even when unable to work. It is recommended that the Town of Clarkdale consult the City of Scottsdale's FMLA and Short-Term Disability Procedures when issuing handbook rewrites.

## **Absent Without Leave, Jury Duty, Military Duty, and Maternity Leave**

The City of Surprise offers a comprehensive and detailed set of policies and procedures regarding Military Leave, Civic Duty, and Unpaid Leaves of Absence. The City's detailed and distinct policy and procedure sections for each form of leave offer a clear set of policies for employees and managers to follow when looking to pursue these forms of leave. Additionally, both the City of Surprise and the Town of Gilbert offer ideas on Maternity/Parental leave that extend outside of the FMLA and could be potentially beneficial for the Town of Clarkdale to consider. It is recommended that the Town of Clarkdale (1) use the City of Surprise as a reference point for reconstructing these policies and (2) consider a possible expansion of maternity/parental leave policies if fiscally feasible.

## **ADA Employment**

It is recommended that the Town of Clarkdale look to the City of Surprise for clarity and conciseness on drafting policies and procedures regarding the ADA while editing and including Clarkdale's pre-existing grievances policies and procedures, while also looking to the City of Chandler for possible additions or edits to the grievance policy.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Town of Clarkdale is a vibrant community with officials working tirelessly to support it. Currently, the handbook is primed for a comprehensive update that provides clear guidance on policies and expectations in a way that is beneficial to the employees and managers it serves. However, by using the handbooks and procedural documents of surrounding municipalities as references, the Town of Clarkdale can make the essential changes the handbook desperately needs. Following consultation with peer community handbooks, recommendations were crafted for Section 4 (Paid Sick Time), Section 5 (Family Medical Leave Act), Section 6 (Absent Without Leave, Jury Duty, Military Duty, and Maternity Leave), and Section 18 (ADA Employment Policy) (Town of Clarkdale, 2021, pp. 12-14). The recommendations offer additional clarity, context, cohesion, and additional policy options that will greatly benefit the Town as they work towards its goal of a handbook that provides support and transparency to its employees.



## REFERENCES

- Acemoglu, D., & Angrist, J. D. (2001). Consequences of employment protection? the case of the Americans with disabilities act. *Journal of Political Economy*, 109(5), 915–957. <https://doi.org/10.1086/322836>
- Baker, M., & Milligan, K. (2008). How does job- protected maternity leave affect mothers' employment? *Journal of Labor Economics*, 26(4), 655–691. <https://doi.org/10.1086/591955>
- Battaglio, P. (2020). The Future of Public Human Resource Management. *Public Personnel Management*, 49(4), 499–502. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091026020948188>
- Berman, E. M., Bowman, J. S., West, J. P., & Van Wart, M. R. (2021). *Human Resource Management in public service: Paradoxes, processes, and problems* (7th ed.). CQ PRESS.
- Blanck, P. D. (1999). Empirical Study of Disability, Employment Policy, and the ADA. *Mental and Physical Disability Law Reporter*, 23(2), 275–280. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20785178>
- Boselie, P., Van Harten, J., & Veld, M. (2019). A human resource management review on public management and public administration research: Stop right there... before we go any further... *Public Management Review*, 23(4), 483–500. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2019.1695880>
- Brown, K. (2004). Human Resource Management in the Public Sector. *Public Management Review*, 6(3), 303–309. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1471903042000256501>
- Brunetto, Y., & Beattie, R. (2019). Changing role of HRM in the public sector. *Public Management Review*, 22(1), 1–5. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2019.1645876>
- City of Chandler. (2018). *Chandler employee personnel rules*. City of Chandler. Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <https://www.chandleraz.gov/government/departments/human-resources/personnel-rules>
- City of Phoenix. (2022). *City of phoenix benefits summary*. City of Phoenix. Retrieved March 20, 2022, from <https://www.phoenix.gov/hr/city-benefits#:~:text=Full%2Dtime%20regular%20employees%20accrue,employee's%20short%2Dterm%20disability%20needs.&text=Paid%20holidays%20for%20full%2Dtime,Day%2C%20Martin%20Luther%20King%20Jr.>
- City of Scottsdale. (2022a). *Employee benefit forms*. Employee Benefit Forms. Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/hr/benefits/benefit-forms>

- City of Scottsdale. (2022b). *Holidays, Vacations & Medical Leave*. City of Scottsdale - Holidays, Vacations & Medical Leave. Retrieved March 20, 2022, from <https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/hr/benefits/timeoff#:~:text=Full%2Dtime%20regular%20and%20probationary,be%20taken%20only%20when%20earned.>
- City of Scottsdale. (2022c). *Human resources*. City of Scottsdale - Human Resources. Retrieved March 22, 2022, from <https://www.scottsdaleaz.gov/hr>
- City of Surprise. (2022). *Employee policy manual: Official website - Surprise, Arizona*. Employee Policy Manual | Official Website - Surprise, Arizona. Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <https://www.surpriseaz.gov/2381/Employee-Policy-Manual>
- Collins, M. C. (1992). The ADA and employment: how it really affects people with disabilities. *Gonzaga Law Review*, 28(2), 209-218.
- Dahl, G. B., Løken, K. V., Mogstad, M., & Salvanes, K. V. (2016). What is the case for paid maternity leave? *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 98(4), 655–670. [https://doi.org/10.1162/rest\\_a\\_00602](https://doi.org/10.1162/rest_a_00602)
- De Paola, M., Scoppa, V., & Pupo, V. (2014). Absenteeism in the Italian public sector: The effects of changes in sick leave policy. *Journal of Labor Economics*, 32(2), 337–360. <https://doi.org/10.1086/674986>
- Emens, E. (2012). Disabling attitudes: U.S. disability law and the ADA amendments act. *American Journal of Comparative Law*, 60(1), 205–234. <https://doi.org/10.5131/ajcl.2011.0020>
- Ertekin, Z. O. (2022). Holistic and critical perspective to politics of dress and the female body in workplace settings. *Eastern Perspectives on Women's Roles and Advancement in Business*, 28–46. <https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-7998-8742-3.ch002>
- Hamouche, S. (2021). Human Resource Management and the COVID-19 crisis: Implications, challenges, opportunities, and future organizational directions. *Journal of Management & Organization*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jmo.2021.15>
- Industrial Commission of Arizona. (2021). *Frequently asked questions about wage and earned paid sick time laws*. Frequently Asked Questions About Wage and Earned Paid Sick Time Laws | Industrial Commission of Arizona. Retrieved March 20, 2022, from <https://www.azica.gov/frequently-asked-questions-about-wage-and-earned-paid-sick-time-laws>
- Jordan, T., & Battaglio, R. P. (2013). Are we there yet? The State of Public Human Resource Management Research. *Public Personnel Management*, 43(1), 25–57. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0091026013511064>

- Kuoppala, J., Lamminpää, A., Väänänen-Tomppo, I., & Hinkka, K. (2011). Employee well-being and sick leave, occupational accident, and disability pension. *Journal of Occupational & Environmental Medicine*, 53(6), 633–640. <https://doi.org/10.1097/jom.0b013e31821aa48c>
- Lopatka, K. T. (2014). The Handbook Rules Charade. *Labor Law Journal*, 65(2), 69–75.
- McCabe, D. M. (2015). Employee Handbooks - Current Trends for Human Capital Competitiveness. *Competition Forum*, 13(2), 228–231.
- Mohr, A., & Anderson, S. (2021). *The U.S. vs. Canada: Maternity leave differences*. Investopedia. Retrieved March 21, 2022, from <https://www.investopedia.com/financial-edge/0512/maternity-leave-basics-canada-vs.-the-u.s.aspx>
- Oxford Economics, & SHRM. (2020). *Paid leave in America: An economic overview*. Oxford Economics. Retrieved March 21, 2022, from <https://www.oxfordeconomics.com/recent-releases/Paid-Leave-in-America-An-economic-overview>
- Pichler, S., Wen, K., & Ziebarth, N. R. (2021). Positive health externalities of mandating paid sick leave. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 40(3), 715–743. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.22284>
- The Volcker Alliance. (2018). *Preparing Tomorrow's Public Service*. Retrieved February 20, 2022, from [https://www.volckeralliance.org/sites/default/files/Preparing%20Tomorrow%27s%20Public%20Service\\_0.pdf](https://www.volckeralliance.org/sites/default/files/Preparing%20Tomorrow%27s%20Public%20Service_0.pdf)
- Ruhm, C. J. (2000). Parental leave and child health. *Journal of Health Economics*, 19(6), 931–960. [https://doi.org/10.1016/s0167-6296\(00\)00047-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/s0167-6296(00)00047-3)
- Rush, C. L. (2012). Amending the Americans with disabilities act. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 32(1), 75–86. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371x11433883>
- Sami, S., & Roychowdhury, S. (2021). Assessing Impact of Covid Pandemic on Role Transition and Effectiveness of Remote Working in the Face of Challenges in Human Resource Management. *Institute of Management Technology*, 10(1).
- Schliwen, A., Earle, A., Hayes, J., & Heymann, S. (2011). The administration and financing of paid sick leave. *International Labour Review*, 150(Issues 1-2), 43-62.
- Schneider, D. (2020). Paid sick leave in Washington state: Evidence on employee outcomes, 2016–2018. *American Journal of Public Health*, 110(4), 499–504. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2019.305481>
- SHRM. (2020, April 2). *ADA/ADAAA Policies*. SHRM. Retrieved March 21, 2022, from <https://www.shrm.org/ResourcesAndTools/tools-and-samples/policies/Pages/default.aspx?loc=mna>

- Town of Clarkdale. (2021). *Personnel Policies and Procedure Manual*.
- Town of Gilbert, (2021). *Personnel Policies and Administrative Guidelines*. <https://www.gilbertaz.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/28572/63759551254340000>
- Town of Oro Valley. (2017). *Human Resources - Personnel Policies*. Oro Valley | it's in our nature. Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <https://www.orovalleyaz.gov/Government/Departments/Human-Resources>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2022). *Census.gov*. Retrieved March 22, 2022, from <https://www.census.gov/>
- U.S. Department of Labor. (2012). *Fact sheet #28: The Family and Medical Leave Act*. United States Department of Labor. Retrieved March 20, 2022, from <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/28-fmla>
- U.S. Department of Labor. (2022). *Family and medical leave (FMLA)*. United States Department of Labor. Retrieved March 20, 2022, from <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/benefits-leave/fmla>
- U.S. Department of Labor. (2022). *Americans with disabilities act*. United States Department of Labor. Retrieved March 21, 2022, from <https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/disability/ada>
- U.S. Office of Personnel Management. (2022). *Federal employees - sick leave*. U.S. Office of Personnel Management. Retrieved March 20, 2022, from <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/leave-administration/fact-sheets/sick-leave-general-information/>
- Williams, W., & Scott, M. P. (2022). *Paid family and medical leave (PFML) by State*. Investopedia. Retrieved March 21, 2022, from <https://www.investopedia.com/paid-family-and-medical-leave-by-state-5089907>
- World Health Organization. (2019). *Trends in maternal mortality 2000 to 2017 estimates by Who, UNICEF, Unfpa, World Bank Group and the United Nations Population Division*. World Health Organization.
- Zhong, Y., Li, Y., Ding, J., & Liao, Y. (2021). Risk management: Exploring emerging human resource issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Risk and Financial Management*, 14(5), 228. <https://doi.org/10.3390/jrfm14050228>

*To access the original student reports, additional materials, and resources, visit:*

[links.asu.edu/PCClarkdaleEmployeeHandbook22S](https://links.asu.edu/PCClarkdaleEmployeeHandbook22S)

*This page was intentionally left blank.*

# **PART 3:**

## **Termination, Appeals, & Performance Evaluations**

**UPDATING DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES AND RETHINKING  
PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

**PAF 509: PUBLIC AFFAIRS CAPSTONE**

**SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

**FACULTY: MALCOLM GOGGIN &  
LADAWN LINGARD**

**CAPSTONE STUDENT: GABRIEL  
ALVAREZ**

# **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

## **Faculty**

Malcolm Goggin

LaDawn Lingard

## **Students**

Gabriel Alvarez

Callie West

Katy Hendricks

Sasha Thomas

## **Editors**

Alison Almand

Shraddha Bejgam

Julia Colbert

Anne Reichman

## **Clarkdale Staff Team**

Randi Stephens

# INTRODUCTION

Employee handbooks are critical to the success of an organization. They communicate a plethora of information to employees, including compensation, leave, benefits, retirement, disciplinary actions, and harassment policies. Scholars in public administration have conducted research to identify some key characteristics of ideal handbooks. Some best practices central to the proper understanding and use of any employee handbook, especially in the public sector, are clear and concise verbiage, non-conflicting policies, and being up to date (Soares, 2018). A language that is not easily accessible to the reader will not communicate the information it needs to. These characteristics go hand and hand with one another. Having non-conflicting policies within an organization eliminates the possibility of confusion as to what is expected and required of an employee and public staff. Ensuring that employee handbook policies are non-conflicting is to make sure they are up to date and accessible to workers.



*Figure 1 Volunteer Leader's Business Meeting, by SHRM*

Scholars in the HRM field have emphasized the importance of keeping employee handbooks up to date and the consequences of neglecting them. The Town of Clarkdale has not updated its employee handbook in almost a decade. Smith and Harris (2014) say that "having an out-of-date employee handbook undermines its utility and exposes the company to avoidable legal claims" (p. 77). One policy area that the Town of Clarkdale has identified for revision is its substance abuse policy. With the passing of Proposition 207 in Arizona in 2020, marijuana has been legalized for recreational use, sale, and taxation for those 21 and over. Though this is only one area of policy, it highlights the need for a comprehensive investigation of the employee handbook of Clarkdale to see what else must be revised and improved.



## **Project scope**

This project will address the issues of outdated policies and improve the overall quality of the employee handbook with support from human resource management (HRM) staff in Clarkdale and other municipalities. This project has operationalized meeting these goals by adopting current and best practices found in the empirical literature and from local HRM professionals.

Drawing from evidence-based practices in the empirical sector should give credence to the work conducted in this project and serve as a model for other HRM professionals. This project's value to Clarkdale is improved HRM policy practice and compliance status with state and federal legislation.

The literature review will include a comprehensive survey of previous research studies, quantitative and qualitative, related to general HRM best practices. Evidence-based practice is informed by scholarly expertise and professional experience, so incorporating these elements into the project's investigation will enrich the understanding of the findings. Focus on best practices in HRM policy and how management has implemented them within various public and private organizations will be most of the research discussed. Following the literature review, detail regarding the research methods utilized in the project will be discussed.

## **Research questions**

The research questions that the project will seek to answer are as follows:

1. How have similar municipalities updated their employee handbooks concerning recent changes in Arizona and Federal law?
2. What best practices in HRM policy have been identified within empirical literature that can be implemented in the Town of Clarkdale?

## **Literature review**

Human resource management is the management of work and people (Mayrhofer & Rapp, 2021). It draws from many disciplines in social science, including, but not limited to, organizational behavior, sociology, economics, and political science. The origins of HRM date back to 1984 and, compared to other perspectives of personal management, broadened its scope of how organizational goals are to be met. While previous perspectives were focused solely on administrative tasks and workforce maintenance, HRM attributes accomplishing organizational goals to the proper management of employees (Kaufman, 2007). Human resource managers consider employees the ultimate resource and so developing skills, fostering positive workplaces, and policies are thought to improve

the likelihood of reaching organizational goals. Those in HRM must plan to utilize these resources to their full potential. However, practitioners and scholars have found that very rarely does planning match the implementation strategy of policy.

Achieving desired employee behaviors is the outcome that decision-makers at high levels of organizations hope to gain through HRM policy. Much of the success of these HRM policies is influenced by how employees perceive them and believe them to be pertinent. Kehoe and Wright (2013) confirm these assertions in their work finding that “employees’ perceptions about the management of their job group likely affect individual-level attitudinal and behavioral outcomes” (p. 385). This highlights the importance of HRM implementation strategies and how HR managers have to carefully decide how to implement said policies. However, unlike traditional models of employee management, HRM professionals are not the only parties deciding how these policies are implemented. There are different hierarchical levels at which employee managers within an organization are responsible for the implementation of HRM policy. This is especially true for the public and private sectors.

### **The nature of public and private sectors in HRM**

The public and private sectors are more connected than most people would expect them to be regarding their approach to HRM. Many of the processes that these organizations implement often blur the line between what is public and what is private. One way that scholars and practitioners distinguish between private organizations and those that are public is determined by establishing an organization's ownership, funding, and authority structure (Rainey, 2009). An organization is considered public when it is government-owned, financed, or run by political authority. While this makes sense in some capacity, others would disagree with this definition. Institutions that provide a "public" service or good but are run privately can be considered by some to fall under the public sector. This can be a hospital or a non-profit charity that provides goods or services to the public that improve the quality and value of life for citizens (Rainey, 2009). Policy creation in HRM for public institutions partially shapes these definitions.

Unlike the public sector, private sector organizations operate within markets. This eliminates the need to rely financially on government appropriations to achieve its goals. The goals of private sector organizations are more closely tied to profit than organizational missions found in the public sector. This can be problematic for public organizations since their goals are often many and at times conflicting (Rainey, 2009). For example, a public organization might set a goal of spending less money on unnecessary services but still want to provide consistent service to consumers. Private organizations have a more focused perspective on what they wish to accomplish in their work and how employees are expected to meet these goals. The value placed on efficiency and effectiveness, as seen in private organizations, has been experimented with in the new public management model (NPM) of HRM which is based on frugality (Hood, 1991). The results of this modeling have been criticized by recent scholars as too simplistic.

## **Achieving innovation**

Moving forward in comparing HRM practice and policy goes beyond adapting private sector values and practices that "work" for the public sector. Achieving innovation is not as simple as it might seem. Work by Knies et al., (2017) posit that the body of knowledge in HRM, public administration, and public management can be greatly enriched and expanded when going beyond disciplinary boundaries. There have been several attempts to do this in research but not by many. The recognition that there are external factors that influence HRM policy formation, implementation, and evaluation has opened the door for further investigation into these issues (Mayrhofer & Rapp, 2021). However, before a proper investigation can be done at this scale, the different forms of HRM need to be segregated to identify best practices that can be applied on a situational basis. Fortunately, scholars in these related disciplines have come together to achieve just that through a contemporary lens of how to view HRM.

## **Comparative human resource management**

The area of HRM that concerns itself with drawing best practices from other areas is called CHRM (Comparative Human Resource Management). Practitioners in the study of HRM have recently begun mapping the process of HRM practice to better align researcher recommendations with practitioner goals (Markoulli et al., 2017). As a result of this work, five major-topic areas have been identified within the field of HRM. These major-topic areas are:

- Strategic HRM
- Experiencing HRM
- Employment Relations
- International HRM
- Assessing People

With the development of these areas, scholars in the field of public administration have learned that the effects of HRM practices differ at the employee level across different sectors. However, these differences are small when comparing the private sector with the public sector (Blom et al., 2020). Of the collective literature regarding differences in HRM practice and scholarship, there seems to be a discrepancy in how terminology is defined in scholarly versus practice-oriented articles (Markoulli et al., 2017). Some themes of these discrepancies have been identified as pertinent to formulating best practices in HRM moving forward.

## **HRM and legislation**

Two themes of interest include an emphasis on HRM professionals' roles in making rules in the workplace and the effects of legislation and how HRM professionals comply with it.

When HRM professionals are developing rules for the workplace, the scope of flexibility on how to operationalize is often determined by their organization. Policy implementation is seldom done without the involvement of organizational leadership. HRM practice helps organizations develop solid positions on recruitment, performance evaluation, and sanction for their employees. The legislative process also has a massive impact on how organizations formulate their HRM policies, especially public sector agencies. It is the responsibility of HRM professionals to navigate compliance with the law and strive for best practices within their organizations. What follows are areas of HRM that are considered best practices.

### **Defining and organizing work**

An HRM professional's primary function is the management of expectations since they are responsible for communicating organizational goals to employees. The way this has been operationalized varies but has included maintenance of job descriptions, work management, and job analysis (Llorens et al., 2018).

#### ***Job description***

Part of job description formation involves concretely defining the work. Transparent and well-written job descriptions have been identified as a key factor in effective HRM practice. Inquiring about specific skill sets needed within organizations has led to the improved acquisition of proper candidates in the workplace (De Mauro et al., 2018). Though this practice has been found to have its merits, it has not always been viewed as favorable to professionals in HRM. Some practitioners have argued that over-detailed job descriptions harm the ability to creatively and flexibly use human resources in an innovative manner (Llorens et al., 2018). However, deficient practice in this area can lead organizations down a path paved with lost productivity and employee turnover (Khairat, 2016). Employees should not be guessing what is expected of them, if they are guessing then assumptions will be made instead. Good HRM policy communicates what is expected and how to get there. If employees do not have confidence in their place of work, they will seek employment elsewhere. This costs organizations money and time as they need to find and train replacements when these outcomes could have been resolved through clear policy description and analysis. Properly balancing precision and expression in policy is a skill that many in HRM are required to master.

#### ***Work management***

Many challenges come with attempting to manage those in the workplace, especially if your role is to do so through policy. In work management, these policies can include how employees might be terminated, disciplined, and appeal that process. Researchers today still have difficulty approaching this topic as there are many ways to implement them. In Russia, termination of employment relationships is one of the key issues facing HRM professionals (Priatama et al., 2018). This is echoed in the United States since the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic. Regardless, HR managers are expected to balance and make

efficient the process by which employees enter, remain in, and leave the workplace. A study by Mujtaba (2022) describes the challenges of managing work in more detail despite the pandemic's effect on employment. Mujtaba posits that it is important to formulate a downsizing strategy or policy so that human resources professionals can accurately evaluate and determine which employees should be dismissed and which should remain for the business to continue (Mujtaba, 2022). While this is an important process, it needs to also be clearly defined and vetted so that opportunities for injustice might be avoided. Having clear rules and procedures for how one might contest or understand disciplinary actions sets the foundation for an organizational culture of transparency where employees feel free and encouraged to perform better under management.

### ***Job analysis***

Proper job analysis is a best practice in HRM by preparing and pushing employees toward success in their working careers. This process often includes performance evaluation, critiquing training requirements, and equipment provided to complete work tasks. Proper completion of work tasks has been shown to increase work motivation which in turn increases motivation to work within their duties (Nasution et al., 2021). Work motivation practices that have been gleaned from job analysis include providing advancement opportunities to successful workers and proper encouragement in tackling difficult jobs. Critical examination of the job organizations seeks to fill will set them up for success regarding organizational outcomes. This form of evaluation will better inform organizations on what standards they should require of their employees.

### **Staff development: education and training**

Every organization facilitates some form of staff training, education, and or development that is usually mutually beneficial to employees and organizations (Llorens et al., 2018). Making opportunities for staff to improve their skills, but also for employers to enhance employee productivity and improve company culture is invaluable. When creating HRM policy surrounding development, education, and training, professionals need to consider three perspectives regarding how this should be done. The three perspectives that should be considered are new employees coming in, existing employees at the workplace, and the organization's values (Llorens et al., 2018).

### ***New employees***

When developing new employees, best practices include new employee orientation, follow-up training for basic skill development, and incorporation of on-the-job training. Though jobs in the public and private sectors may overlap on how to perform certain functions, organizations have different ways of performing job functions. A well-developed employee orientation in combination with paid, follow-up training, both on and off the job, will better set up employees to succeed in their organizations.

## ***Existing employees***

Existing employees should be treated with the same intentionality but require a more position-specific approach to their ongoing development. For example, having a part-time or temporary employee go through training should look slightly different from what a full-time employee would receive to be ready to work. Human resource management policy should differentiate and implement training and developments that cater to the specific needs of the employment demographics within its organization.



***Figure 2*** Employee training at Arizona State University

## ***Organizational values***

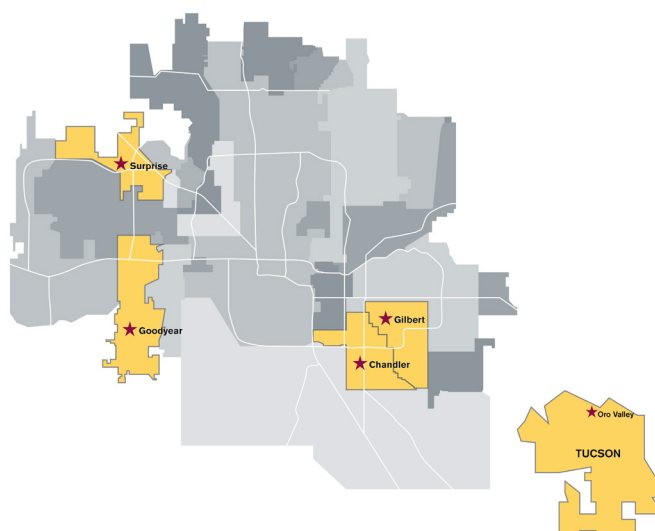
Some public organizations have approached development broadly using team building, diversity training, and continuous learning practices. Though these may seem like standard forms of development, organizations implement them differently. It is the goal of HRM policy to influence the outcomes of these developments by utilizing the goals and organizational values of leadership and staff. Empirical evidence has supported the importance these practices have on organizational outcomes. Kadiresan et al. (2015) found that using these HRM practices can enhance the productivity and performance of employees. They further found that innovative and well-designed HRM practices can form employee commitment, which is associated with positive attitudes and behavior (Kadiresan et al., 2015).

## RESEARCH METHODS

This project was guided by the following research questions concerning the Town of Clarkdale, Arizona's handbook update:

1. How have similar municipalities updated their employee handbook to include recent changes in Arizona and Federal law?
2. What best practices in HRM policy have been identified within empirical literature that can be implemented in the Town of Clarkdale?

First, there will be a comprehensive review of the Town of Clarkdale's employee handbook. A comprehensive review of the Town of Clarkdale's employee handbook will identify which areas must be changed if at all, to follow state and federal legislation. This was split up into four groups of review because four MPA students are working on this project. Each student was responsible for developing HRM policy recommendations for the Town of Clarkdale. This project report reviewed Section 9 (Termination, Reduction in Force, Suspension, Resignation and Working Conditions), Section 11 (Disciplinary Action), Section 13 (Appeals), Section 17 (Policy Against Harassment), and Section 20 (Performance Evaluations). After finishing the initial review of the Town of Clarkdale's employee handbook, a review was conducted on similar municipality policies. Of those in Arizona, the cities and towns of Goodyear, Surprise, Oro Valley, Gilbert, Chandler, and Buckeye have been identified as similar municipalities. Employee handbooks and or guidelines were found and collected from each municipality listed for this investigation. The results were then reviewed to determine policy recommendations for the Town of Clarkdale's employee handbook and their applicability to the town's current edition. These recommendations will be provided to leadership within the town for consideration.



*Figure 3* Towns and cities used as reference for the purpose of this report

## Limitations

Although this project was a comprehensive review of specific topics surrounding employee handbooks, there are several limitations to consider. First, this review was limited to several human resource handbooks in the Arizona area. This limits the generalizability of the findings and their benefits to HRM practitioners at large. Also, the timeline of the project is a limitation. As this project was conducted during an academic semester, it limited the amount of time the students had to conduct the requested research.

Community	Handbook Link
Town of Gilbert	Personnel Policies and Administrative Guidelines <a href="https://www.gilbertaz.gov/departments/human-resources">https://www.gilbertaz.gov/departments/human-resources</a>
City of Chandler	Chandler Employee Personnel Rules <a href="https://www.chandleraz.gov/government/departments/human-resources/personnel-rules">https://www.chandleraz.gov/government/departments/human-resources/personnel-rules</a>
City of Goodyear	Policy and Administrative Guidelines Manual <a href="https://www.goodyearaz.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/620/635479236909470000">https://www.goodyearaz.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/620/635479236909470000</a>
City of Surprise	Employee Policy Manual <a href="https://www.surpriseaz.gov/2381/Employee-Policy-Manual">https://www.surpriseaz.gov/2381/Employee-Policy-Manual</a>
Town of Oro Valley	Personnel Policies <a href="https://www.orovalleyaz.gov/Government/Departments/Human-Resources">https://www.orovalleyaz.gov/Government/Departments/Human-Resources</a>

## FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

The Town of Gilbert and the City of Chandler each had their versions of an employee handbook or equivalent. Both had some policies related or identical to the areas of termination, disciplinary action, appeals, harassment, and performance evaluations.

### Section 9: Termination

#### Town of Gilbert

The Town of Gilbert stipulates that those responsible for determining the termination of employees fall under the jurisdiction of supervisors. Supervisors include, but are not limited to Managers and Department Directors. The Town of Gilbert's primary policy of employment in the section Service Definitions, Responsibilities, and Protections (1.3.8), states that all employment is on an at-will basis. The exception to this policy is Police and Fire personnel and "certain" employees hired before August 1, 2018, who retained covered status.



Under this policy, the Town may terminate the employment relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice. This can be done regardless of any provision in the employee handbook document, furthermore, nothing in the document shall limit the right to terminate employment. In the section No Payout (3.8.7.5), there is a policy that determines the distribution of unpaid parental leave following a termination. The handbook states that upon the termination of an individual's employment with the Town of Gilbert, he/she/they will not be paid for any unused paid parental leave.

Under Sick Leave Payment Upon Separation (3.8.3.6.2), there is a policy detailing how unpaid sick leave is distributed to a re-hired employee that has been terminated before. The handbook states that all accrued, unpaid sick leave will be reinstated if the employee is rehired within nine months of termination.

### **City of Chandler**

The City of Chandler stipulates that all appointees and employees under categories two through six, those who are not elected officials, of the unclassified service in an at-will capacity and their employees are subject to termination by the City. This is found in Rule 1 titled, General Provisions, in Section 5 titled Classified and Unclassified Service. The City of Chandler can at any time for any lawful reason, unless otherwise specifically provided by law or in a written contract of employment. This concludes the City of Chandler's universal policies on termination in their employee handbook. There is mention of termination in related areas within the handbook that are discussed in the following sections under their appropriate rule section.

### **City of Goodyear**

Termination, as defined by the City of Goodyear, is the end of employment initiated by the City and is interchangeable with the term dismissal. One of the policies that stood out in this handbook was the trial service period. It stipulates that for 12 months; employees are employed on an at-will basis and do not have access to appeal or termination rights. Unlike the Town of Clarkdale, this policy reduces the discretion of termination without cause or notice and could be implemented in a similar fashion. The criminal record of an employee is also discussed in this handbook.

Goodyear employees are required to report a conviction of any criminal offense; however, this will not automatically lead to termination. The supervising department will have the final say on the applicability of said conviction on employment status. The City of Goodyear also has an e-verify policy regarding termination. Federal law requires all employers to verify the identity and employment eligibility of all persons hired to work in the United States. The Town of Clarkdale has no mention in its employee handbook of how to comply with this law.

## **City of Surprise**

The City of Surprise defines termination as a separation from service initiated by the City (City of Surprise, 2022). Termination is mostly coupled with prohibited behavior as defined in the handbook. A unique area in this section of policy regards the termination and onboarding of volunteers for the city. This includes informing affected staff or departments that might have been relying on the services provided by volunteers. Having listed steps for situations regarding volunteers could be beneficial to the Town of Clarkdale if they have not outlined it already. Other areas discussed include the use of City resources for other than intended purposes and employment verification. Termination may follow employees who use City resources for non-work-related activities, which is a standard policy as far as HRM policy goes. Not having proper employment verification may also result in termination as not complying violated federal employment law. Lastly, some termination policy is interrelated with the disciplinary action or "corrective" action policies listed in the handbook.

## **Town of Oro Valley**

The Town of Oro Valley defines termination as the separation of an employee from employment by any means other than retirement, whether it be voluntary (resignation) or involuntary (dismissal) (Town of Oro Valley, 2022). The Town of Oro Valley has a brief termination section of its handbook detailing the different forms of termination such as resignation, retirement, dismissal, and reduction in force. Some unique areas of this policy are the voluntary resignation and retirement sections. In the voluntary resignation section, the Town of Oro Valley details the requested time frame of notice leaving employment. This is the first handbook to do so and does help smooth over workload transitions. This is even specified to those in higher positions of authority as a request and not a mandate. The retirement section outlines the timeframe concerning the eligibility for retirement. Usually, this would be found in other areas of policy.



*Figure 4 Oro Valley Town Council, by Tuscon local media*

## **Section 11: Disciplinary Action**

### **Town of Gilbert**

The Town of Gilbert has multiple areas describing who administers disciplinary action. According to the employee handbook, supervisors are responsible for disciplining their subordinate employees. Supervisors include, but are not limited to Managers, and Department Directors. Under Personnel Records (1.13), Human Resources must maintain employee personnel files which are considered official records of employment. This includes ensuring disciplinary actions are promptly submitted to Human Resources for appropriate retention, and where necessary, kept in separate files. While there is a description of who administers disciplinary action, there is no clear definition of what that entails. For example, the only other section where disciplinary action falls under Documentation Requirements (3.8.3.3). This policy states that upon return to work an employee may be required to submit a return-to-work documentation such as a signed statement from a qualified healthcare provider. Failure to provide a required return to work documentation may result in disciplinary action. There was no context as to what disciplinary action would look like.

### **City of Chandler**

The City of Chandler has an independent section of its employee handbook to discuss the joint issues of disciplinary action and appeal procedures under Rule 5. Concerning disciplinary action, there are five areas of the procedure discussed. Section 1 of Rule 5 is the notice of disciplinary action of dismissal, demotion, or suspension. This area of policy stipulates that Department Managers who determine that a regular employee should be dismissed, demoted, or suspended must prepare a written pre-disciplinary notice with specific reason(s) and supporting evidence for the disciplinary action. There must be support provided that allows the employee to understand the reason for the action taken against them. The steps following depend on the desired course of action following the pre-disciplinary notice. Many policies, such as those discussed previously, are similar to the Town of Clarkdale's employee handbook. However, the Town of Clarkdale handbook would benefit from the 21 detailed sections that Chandler has included regarding operational steps to administer disciplinary action policy.

### **City of Goodyear**

The City of Goodyear has six distinct forms of disciplinary action:

- Supervisory counseling
- Letters of instruction
- Disciplinary probation

- Suspension
- Demotion
- Termination

The letter of instruction is a unique policy as it communicates important information to employees from supervisors. These letters detail the occurrence of unacceptable performance or events and reference the city policies that have been violated. Furthermore, they include a statement of the expected future consequences of violations and a detailed plan for improvement that must be signed by the employee, supervisor, and department director. This policy is not present within the Town of Clarkdale's employee handbook but could be beneficial in the effort to innovate reduction in disciplinary action. Lastly, the City of Goodyear details the causes for the initiation of disciplinary action. There are 37 listed reasons that could initiate disciplinary action against an employee, and this is something that the Town of Clarkdale's handbook lacks. Disciplinary action is determined more liberally in the Town of Clarkdale and could be more clearly defined as to what employees could expect as cause for it.

### **City of Surprise**

The City of Surprise takes a policy philosophy of intending to provide each employee with the opportunity to correct unacceptable behavior, but this is not guaranteed based on offense severity. The city distinguishes different forms of correction as corrective, non-disciplinary action, disciplinary action, notice of action, and notice of deficient performance. Specifically, disciplinary corrective action is a corrective action that has a financial impact on employees such as suspension, demotion, or termination. What is unique in this handbook is the classification of disciplinary actions and alternative punishments discussed into group one and group two offense categories.

Group one offenses automatically result in termination and include theft, violating OSHA, and workplace violence. Group two offenses are less serious in nature and only result in disciplinary action after a third (group two) offense is recorded. The handbook makes it clear that disciplinary action should not be used in group two offense counseling unless coaching and written reprimand have been attempted. This is drawing from a progressive model of discipline that treats offenses in culmination as necessary. Lastly, there is discussion on alternative disciplines. In this case, employees may request that unpaid suspension may be replaced with forfeiting paid time off by the hour to fulfill the suspension penalty. This could be a useful option for those employees whose work is relied on day-to-day.

The handbook makes it clear that disciplinary action should not be used in group two offense counseling unless coaching and written reprimand have been attempted. This is drawing from a progressive model of discipline that treats offenses in culmination as necessary. Lastly, there is discussion on alternative disciplines. In this case, employees may request that unpaid suspension may be replaced with forfeiting paid time off by the hour to fulfill the suspension penalty. This could be a useful option for those employees whose work is relied on day-to-day.

### **Town of Oro Valley**

The disciplinary action policy in the Town of Oro Valley has much more detail behind it than in the previous section. Compared to the other handbook reviewed thus far, this handbook outlines very specific details regarding definitions and procedures. The approach to discipline is a corrective and progressive model. They clearly define what formal and informal discipline look like, as well as situations that may warrant disciplinary action. Drawing from a **positive discipline structure**, the Town of Oro Valley incorporates performance improvement plans in their letters of reprimand and allows for an investigatory interviewing structure. These actions are set in place to reduce overall disciplinary action but also foster a remediation culture among staff employed by the Town.

---

#### *Editor's Note*

---

According to SHRM (2022), the positive discipline system "graduated steps for dealing with problems related to an employee's conduct or performance that do not meet clearly defined standards and policies." Sample steps may include:

1. Counseling
  2. Verbal warning
  3. Written warning
  4. Possible next courses of action, such as transfer, withhold compensation increases, demotion, suspension, or termination
- 

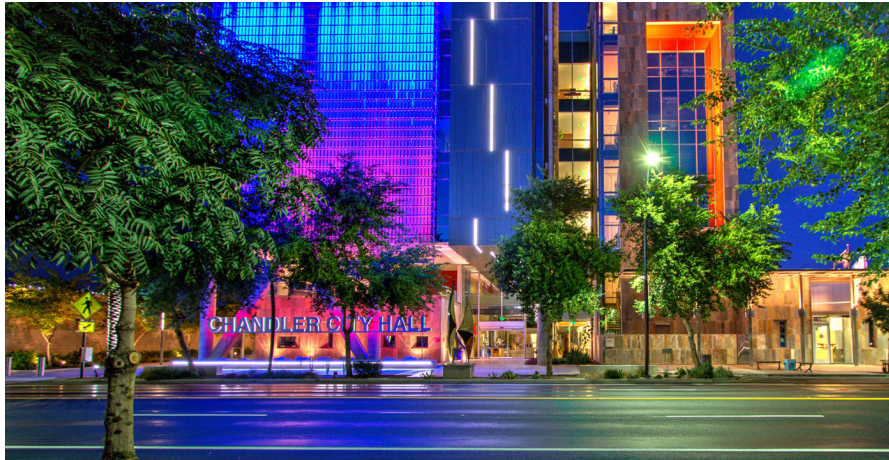
## **Section 13: Appeals**

### **City of Chandler**

Concerning the appeals section of the Rule 5 in the employee handbook, a regular classified employee who has completed the probationary period may appeal any dismissal, demotion, or suspension to the City Manager and the Merit System Board by submitting the appeal in writing to the City Manager through the Human Resources Director. The appeal shall be made within five workdays of receipt of the written notice of dismissal, demotion, or suspension if the notice has been personally delivered to the employee. If the notice has been sent by certified mail to the employee, the employee shall also have five workdays to

appeal from the date the notice is mailed. Any dismissal, demotion, or suspension shall take effect on the date indicated in the dismissal, demotion, or suspension order despite any pending appeal. The appeal procedure shall normally be a two-step process.

The City Manager, or designee, shall first review and decide on the appeal following the Disciplinary Review Group procedures described in this Rule. If the employee is not satisfied with the City Manager's decision resulting from the disciplinary Review Group Process, the employee may further appeal to the Merit System Board following the procedures in this Rule. Lastly, no appeal shall be considered if more than five work days have elapsed from the date of the written notice of dismissal, demotion, or suspension if the notice is personally delivered to the employee, or five workdays from the date any such notice is mailed if not personally delivered.



*Figure 5 Chandler City Hall, by City of Chandler*

### **City of Goodyear**

The City of Goodyear details in their handbook the issues are subject to appeals. The three discussed issues include suspensions greater than 16 hours (24 hours for 56-hour employees), involuntary demotions that result in a loss of pay, and terminations. Having clearly defined areas for employees to view as within their appellate rights could be beneficial for the Town of Clarkdale to consider.

### **City of Surprise**

Most of the appeal language in this handbook communicates that appeal is not an option for most situations. However, there is a specific policy section that details the employee's right of appeal when it is applicable. Appeals to disciplinary action such as termination or suspension may be heard by the personnel appeal board following a hearing and burden of

proof investigation. Appeals must be made within 90 days and once received, the appeal authority will have 45 days to make determinations on appeal requests. There is also detail about employment status during the appeal process. If the said employee does not have enough paid time off to use, they are placed on administrative leave without pay until the appeal process is completed. These appeals policies are unique since they only apply when decisions are made without a premise such as a discipline or corrective action. This in part speaks to the at-will employment model used.

### **Town of Oro Valley**

The appeals policies outlined in the Town of Oro Valley's handbook are housed generally in multiple areas of the handbook as there is no "appeals" section. Some appeals policy was found in the disciplinary action and grievance policy sections. Concerning disciplinary appeals, their policy stipulates that employees can appeal the dismissal, demotion, and or suspension within 10 days.

One of the unique areas of this policy is in the hearing procedures. It stipulates that the HR Director and Town Manager can select who is designated as a hearing officer and can change them at any time as stipulated in the handbook. The overall hearing process is similar to the other handbooks previously discussed, except for the amount of detail communicated to employees. Under the grievance policies appeals are mentioned in the form of an administrative review officer. Much like the hearing review officer, they are a selected authority by the Town Manager and others, but there is not much comment on how often they deal with appeals. The scope of responsibility is broad and can go beyond more formally known appeals processes.

## **Section 17: Harassment**

### **City of Chandler**

The City of Chandler has a 10-page anti-harassment and anti-bullying policy and complaint procedure. All employees working in The City of Chandler are required to take the time necessary to understand their obligations under this policy. The policy stipulates that the city provide a work environment free from discrimination, bullying, harassment, and retaliation. The City defines harassment as serious, severe, or pervasive conduct that is unwanted or offensive and directed toward an individual because of his or her race, gender and or/ gender identity or expression, color, creed, religion, age, national origin, ethnicity, disability, veteran or military status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, genetic information, marital status, political affiliation, citizenship status or any other legally prohibited basis, that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity or creating an intimidating, humiliating, hostile or offensive environment. Examples listed in the policy include but are not limited to unwanted and inappropriate physical contact, attention, gifts, messages, mocking,

belittling, and stalking. Violation of the policies listed in the document subjects employees to disciplinary action and/or remedial action up to and including termination. This policy also stipulates that reporting potential violations requires confidential investigations that cannot be retaliated against by another employee or supervisor at the risk of discipline up to and including termination.

### **City of Goodyear**

The City of Goodyear defines harassment in two ways, as unlawful and or sexual in nature. Regarding education on harassment, the City of Goodyear requires annual harassment prevention and ethics training. The City of Goodyear lays out clear steps for the process of reporting, investigating, and policy enforcement for those experiencing harassment. In addition to this, the handbook explains multiple examples of harassment in the workplace that may not be commonly understood by employees. Examples of harassment in the workplace could be verbal, visual, physical, or even operational in the form of undesirable work assignments due to membership in a protected class. The only difference between these policies and the Town of Clarkdale is the situational examples provided. Including explicit examples of more non-traditional forms of harassment might be beneficial to the Town of Clarkdale.



*Figure 6 Goodyear Civic Square at GSO, by City of Goodyear*

### **City of Surprise**

Much like the City of Goodyear, the City of Surprise distinguishes and defines harassment as either sexual or unlawful discrimination. They include examples of verbal and non-verbal forms of harassment and how the reporting process works. A unique finding within this section of the policy was the detailing of what activity is considered protected when reporting harassment and what cannot be retaliated against. Protected activity includes:

- Reporting, Filing, Testifying, Assisting, or Participating in any manner in any investigation
- Proceeding, or Hearing of unlawful discrimination



The Town of Clarkdale should consider the benefits of a similar list as that might alleviate barriers to harassment reporting among affected employees. All other policy descriptions regarding harassment are comparable to the Town of Clarkdale.

### **Town of Oro Valley**

The Town of Oro Valley has a joint workplace and non-discrimination policy section. The purpose of this policy is to create and maintain a work environment in which people are treated with dignity, decency, and respect. The Town of Oro Valley defines and distinguishes between discrimination and harassment and the different forms harassment can take. For example, the handbook discusses workplace harassment, sexual harassment, and defines retaliation. More importantly, the Town clearly lays out the procedure for employees who wish to make a formal complaint of harassment and how the town itself must respond. Of the handbooks covered so far, this is one of the more explicit detailing harassment prevention and policy. Follow-up with the petitioner and accused in the complaint are also discussed.

## **Section 20: Performance Evaluations**

### **Town of Gilbert**

The Town of Gilbert has multiple areas in the employee handbook related to the performance evaluation of their employees. Under the Personnel Records (1.13) policy, Human Resources must maintain employee personnel files which are considered official records of employment. This includes ensuring performance reviews are promptly submitted to Human Resources for appropriate retention, and where necessary, kept in separate files. In section Fair and Equitable Compensation (2.2), the handbook states that the Town of Gilbert embraces a pay for performance philosophy related to annual compensation reviews. This includes having regular meetings between supervisors regarding performance to date and development opportunities.



*Figure 7 Gilbert water tower, by Town of Gilbert*

The handbook also explains that the Chief People Officer is required to establish a performance development program to ensure that the best performing employees receive the highest percentage of a wage increase. There is also a requirement that all full-time employees be eligible for employee assistance programs that provide personal, family, and substance abuse counseling and referral services. Part of these services includes mandatory performance improvement counseling. Though there is detail regarding how often and who conducts performance evaluation, there is little detail on how personal is going to be evaluated. The pay for performance philosophy suggests that if you are doing well, you will receive a favorable review. Still, there is not a formal procedure for how this will be carried out.

### **City of Chandler**

The City of Chandler, under Rule 13, discusses the policy and procedure for performance appraisals. Section three of this area of policy specifies when appraisal reports are to be filed and who they are led by. Concerning timelines, appraisal reports should be filed whenever there is a change in position as a result of promotion or demotion. They must also be done following employment probation period completion and at the discretion of the department and HR managers. The appraisal authority shall be the person who is directly supervising the work of the employee being appraised. The reviewing authority shall be the director of the department of which the employee is part. Lastly, the human resources director shall provide oversight of the performance appraisal process.

### **City of Goodyear**

The City of Goodyear established that all employees whose performance goes under review must develop or be designated a set of performance goals for the next review period. Part of this process includes the encouragement of employees to track their own accomplishments to provide their supervisor with for the next review period. This could act as a motivating factor for employees to perform favorably and to gratify themselves by accomplishing set goals. In comparison to the Town of Clarkdale, the City of Goodyear has more details on how performance evaluation is to be defined and conducted. However, all other policies regarding performance evaluation policy are comparable to one another.

### **City of Surprise**

Much like the previously mentioned municipalities, the City of Surprise has an annual evaluation cycle that employees must take part in every year. Some unique findings in this area of the policy include definitional rankings of performance and employee recognition. The City of Surprise has defined five categories of performance designation which are: exceeding, meets with commendations, meets, needs improvements, and unsatisfactory. Each has an explicit definition of what places employees in each category.

These defined categories of performance designation are a missing component in the Town of Clarkdale's handbook and could give tangible results to strive towards as an employee. The other component of performance evaluation took the form of employee recognition. The City of Surprise has various awards that are given to employees who have made valuable contributions to their workplace. Awards are designated by department directors and the City Manager's office while nominations can also include other City employees. It could be worthwhile for the Town of Clarkdale to consider employee recognition as a means of creating a positive organizational culture. As a small town, it should not be overburdensome to innovate.

### **Town of Oro Valley**

The Town of Oro Valley has a small section defining and describing performance evaluations for their employees. Currently, the policy only states that performance evaluations shall be conducted at the discretion of department heads and HR managers. It does not list specifically what is being used as the basis of evaluation and only communicates decisions on employment and rewards. This is one of the narrower definitions of performance evaluation policy in the investigation so far. There seems to be subjectivity to how the review process can go and few concrete steps to improve or meet organizational goals.

#### ***Personnel Policy 20 Reports and Records***

“All employees of the Town shall receive performance evaluations, on forms prepared by the Human Resources office and approved by the Town Manager pursuant to schedules determined by the Town. Employees may be evaluated more often on an informal or formal basis at the discretion of the Department Head. Each employee will have the opportunity to provide input into their performance evaluation. Where the performance evaluation differs significantly from the employee feedback, or where performance indicates the employee is not meeting expectations, the performance evaluation shall be reviewed by the Human Resources Director and the Department Head prior to discussions with the employee” (Town of Oro Valley, 2022, p. 1).

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Definitions

The Town of Clarkdale should develop a comprehensive list of definitions to use within the handbook. In both municipalities that were investigated, the employee handbooks had a list of terms that defined words that are subject to discretion by the institution. For example, the Town of Gilbert had sections that informed of disciplinary action but not of how it was operationalized. The City of Chandler had a concrete definition and gave examples of what disciplinary actions included. Empirical research has supported the importance of having clearly defined and accessible language in HRM policy, especially in the implementation of rules. Having established terminology can lead to an easier transition in policy innovation and change (Trullen et al., 2020). Lastly, regarding general recommendations, the Town of Clarkdale should consider recording when the handbook policies individually have been last updated.

## Termination policy updates

Concerning termination policies, the Town of Clarkdale should consider adding in a procedure for employees that have been terminated but have or will be rehired. In the other handbooks investigated there was mention of this circumstance. Given that the Town of Clarkdale has a small population size, there is reason to believe that at some point the rehiring of a once terminated employee could happen. This could be a positive for the Town in cases where people who were not performing to the job standard at one point are now able and willing to meet the minimum standards set by the job description.

## Employment verification

Establishing a form of employment verification is another concern that should be addressed. It is a federal law to have compliance in this area and the Town does not explicitly state if they are following those guidelines.

## Disciplinary action additions

One of the most important recommendations for the Town of Clarkdale is to formally write out common or mutually understood causes for disciplinary action. Throughout most of the employee handbooks reviewed, there are specific events listed for employees to understand the need for disciplinary action. Visibility of the action of cause can deter violations within the organization looking forward. Another equally important point is the consideration of a positive and progressive disciplinary model. In the disciplinary action process most handbooks had employees and supervisors collaborate to understand the offense and develop a plan of compliance and reprimand for future violations. This can improve the employee-employer relationship and foster an accountability culture between the two. These

perspectives can be implemented on a case-by-case basis but should be considered in the effort to achieve organizational goals and reduce employment violations.

## Appeals

Concerning appeals, the Town of Clarkdale should consider establishing more formal timelines for the appeals process with eligibility. Compared to the other handbooks that were reviewed, the Town of Clarkdale is less specific in this regard and could benefit from more transparency. A common issue that was seen among the handbooks in the review was a lack of clarification on the eligibility for the appeals process. Appeals policy was scattered among other policies and usually communicated what employees could not do. There was not much information on what employees could do who qualify for appeals, without looking in alternatively listed areas. Creating a section in the Town of Clarkdale handbook that defines and describes appeals more completely could not only encourage the proper use of appeals but also improve compliance with required employee rights according to A.R.S. legislation.

## Harassment

Concerning harassment policies, the Town of Clarkdale should consider having structured and mandatory harassment training for employees at all levels. During the investigation, the City of Chandler was found to have a 10-page document on harassment policy and stipulated that everyone must review it. The Town of Clarkdale has clear and defined examples and consequences for harassment but not a formal program in harassment education. **There is mention of the discretion that Town Managers and Department Heads have when implementing these anti-harassment policies but having a formal structure that is subject to tweaking is more beneficial than at-will implementation strategies.** This will ensure that a formal and expected program is known to employees and ways of addressing special circumstances can be done on a case-by-case basis. Lastly, including definitions of different forms of harassment (workplace versus sexual) and the compliant process could help inform and encourage employees to report these violations.

## Performance evaluation

Concerning performance evaluation policies, the Town of Clarkdale should consider **including a philosophy statement or actionable goal for employees to meet in preparation for their evaluations.** The Town of Clarkdale does establish who and when performance reviews will occur, however, there is no mention of how one might prepare feasibly for an evaluation. For example, the City of Chandler adopted a pay-for-performance philosophy. This incentivizes employees, in one way, to seek ways to improve the performance of their job. This philosophy does not need to be the model adopted by Clarkdale, but the concept could prove beneficial when communicating to employees about, what could be, a stressful time.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Town of Clarkdale has an employee handbook that is doing well in some respects, specifically with termination, disciplinary action, appeals, harassment, and performance evaluation policies. However, part of good policy is knowing when to adapt and how to do it properly. Recognizing the need for a more competency-based HRM, especially in a small town, is important as competencies represent the language of expected performance. During this investigation, there were many areas across all sides that had unclear expectations of how policy and procedures should be conducted while in public employment. Procedure comparison and innovation have been part of professional HRM practice since the area has been developed. There is no one right way to practice HRM, but there are areas that most professionals agree are best defined clearly and concisely (Blejenbergh et al., 2021). By ensuring technical competencies are being met, (such as policy language), HRM leaders are also ensuring behavioral competencies will be met and maintained by their staff.

## REFERENCES

- Bleijenbergh, I., van Mierlo, J., & Bondarouk, T. (2021). Closing the gap between scholarly knowledge and practice: Guidelines for HRM action research. *Human resource management review*, 31(2), 100764.
- Blom, R., Kruijven, P. M., Van der Heijden, B. I., & Van Thiel, S. (2020). One HRM fits all? A meta-analysis of the effects of HRM practices in the public, semipublic, and private sector. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 40(1), 3-35.
- City of Chandler. (2022), *Chandler Employee Personnel Rules*. <https://www.chandleraz.gov/government/departments/human-resources/personnel-rules>
- City of Goodyear. (2020). *Policy and Administrative Guidelines Manual*. <https://www.goodyearaz.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/620/635479236909470000>
- City of Surprise. (2022), *Employee Policy Manual*. <https://www.surpriseaz.gov/2381/Employee-Policy-Manual>
- De Mauro, A., Greco, M., Grimaldi, M., & Ritala, P. (2018). Human resources for Big Data professions: A systematic classification of job roles and required skill sets. *Information Processing & Management*, 54(5), 807-817.
- Hood, C. (2015). A Public Management for All Seasons?. In *The Oxford Handbook of Classics in Public Policy and Administration*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199646135.013.25>
- Kaufman, B. E. (2007). The development of HRM in historical and international perspective. In *The Oxford handbook of human resource management*.
- Kehoe, R. R., & Wright, P. M. (2013). The impact of high-performance human resource practices on employees' attitudes and behaviors. *Journal of management*, 39(2), 366-391.
- Khairat, G. (2016). Investigating the importance of applying Job Descriptions to Human Resources Management Functions in Egyptian Travel Agencies. *International Academic Journal Faculty of Tourism and Hotel Management*, 2(2), 205-230.
- Knies, E., Boselie, P., Gould-Williams, J., & Vandenabeele, W. (2017). Strategic human resource management and public sector performance: Context matters. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 1-13.
- Llorens, J. J., Klingner, D. E., & Nalbandian, J. (2018). *Public Personnel Management* (7th ed.). Routledge.
- Markoulli, M. P., Lee, C. I., Byington, E., & Felps, W. A. (2017). Mapping Human Resource Management: Reviewing the field and charting future directions. *Human Resource Management Review*, 27(3), 367-396.
- Mayrhofer, W., & Rapp, M. (2021). HRM in different countries. In *Research Handbook on HRM in the Public Sector*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

- Mujtaba, B. G. (2022). Workplace Management Lessons on Employee Recruitment Challenges, Furloughs, and Layoffs during the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Journal of Human Resource and Sustainability Studies*, 10(1), 13-29.
- Nasution, M., Yeni, S., Yondra, A., & Putri, A. (2021). The Influence of Organizational Structure and Job Analysis on Work Motivation and Its impact on the Performance of the Office of Cooperatives for Small and Medium Enterprises, Industry and Trade (KOPERINDAG) Mentawai Islands Regency. *American Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Research*, 5(1), 444-453.
- Rainey, H. G. (2009). *Understanding and managing public organizations*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Smith, K. J. and Harris, L.M. (2014) Drafting an effective employee handbook. *Employment Relations Today*, 41(1), 71-79
- Soares, S. M. (2018). *A Content Analysis of Municipal Employee Handbooks in the Commonwealth of Virginia*.
- Town of Clarkdale, (2017). *Personnel Policies and Procedure Manual*.
- Town of Gilbert, (2021). *Personnel Policies and Administrative Guidelines*. <https://www.gilbertaz.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/28572/637595512543400000>
- Town of Oro Valley. (2022). *Personnel Policies*. <https://www.orovalleyaz.gov/Government/Departments/Human-Resources>
- Trullen, J., Bos, Nehles, A., & Valverde, M. (2020). From intended to actual and beyond: A cross-disciplinary view of (human resource management) implementation. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 22(2), 150-176.

*To access the original student reports, additional materials, and resources, visit:*

[links.asu.edu/PCClarkdaleEmployeeHandbook22S](https://links.asu.edu/PCClarkdaleEmployeeHandbook22S)



*This page was intentionally left blank.*

# **PART 4:**

## **Probationary Period & Employee Benefits**

**SUPPORTING EMPLOYEE SUCCESS AND ALIGNING WITH  
UPDATES IN STATE LEGISLATION**

**PAF 509: PUBLIC AFFAIRS CAPSTONE**

**SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

**FACULTY: MALCOLM GOGGIN &  
LADAWN LINGARD**

**CAPSTONE STUDENT: CALLIE WEST**

# **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

## **Faculty**

Malcolm Goggin

LaDawn Lingard

## **Students**

Gabriel Alvarez

Callie West

Katy Hendricks

Sasha Thomas

## **Editors**

Alison Almand

Shraddha Bejgam

Julia Colbert

Anne Reichman

## **Clarkdale Staff Team**

Randi Stephens

# INTRODUCTION

Every organization has a human resources (HR) department which sets out to establish procedures and guidelines for employees. Each HR department has an obligation to provide and notify employees of their rights and responsibilities, and these protocols are typically provided in an employee handbook. In 2006, the HR department from the Town of Clarkdale, Arizona adopted its employee handbook, the Town's Personnel Policies and Procedure Manual. The HR department has requested a review of its employee handbook to update any policies that may have changed due to legislation recently passed locally and federally. According to the town's HR department head, Randi Stephens, this employee handbook has not been updated since 2017 and includes many sections that need to be revamped. Since 2017, there have been state and federal legislation that has been enacted, such as the recently passed Proposition 207, which legalized recreational use of marijuana (Baxter, 2020).



*Figure 1 Town of Clarkdale Community Development Department Building*

## Project scope

This project will address two key purposes. One purpose is to explain the importance of the need for HR departments to have an updated employee handbook year-round. This project will discuss the role of employee handbooks, and their significance to everyday HR functions. The employee handbook serves as a commitment between employer and employee. Employee handbooks lay the foundation of employee regulations and policies. It allows an employer to set a standard of operation and an employee to know the standard.

The second purpose that this project will address is the employee handbook that is specific to the Town of Clarkdale, Arizona. A review of this handbook will be discussed

in detail. For the purposes of this project, research strategies include a peer community assessment. Gaining this information will provide examples of what other HR departments are doing to maintain their respective employee handbooks. This information will also allow the HR department of Clarkdale to see a set standard for local government. Surrounding municipalities that were proposed by the team to research include the City of Cottonwood, Town of Marana, and Town of Gilbert.

## Research questions

Research questions to be investigated for this project include:

1. Which sections of the Clarkdale employee handbook are outdated and out of compliance with state and federal laws?
2. How can these outdated sections be updated in a way that both ensures the handbook meets compliance guidelines while also meeting the needs of Town employees?
3. What other cities/towns in Arizona have completed a similar update? How can the Town of Clarkdale best update its handbook?

Successful completion of this project will yield recommendations for an updated employee handbook for the following sections: Section 1 (Probationary period), Section 8 (Employee Benefits), and Section 12 (Substance Abuse Policy). Each section will be researched to find any relevant research that coincides with newly enacted legislation. Sections will be compared to other employee handbooks from HR departments in surrounding municipalities. Comparing the employee handbooks from other cities will allow researchers to have a starting point and a clean standard for the new rewrite.

## Literature review

Literature to be reviewed will include material on the background and context of HR, the importance of an employee handbook, and the essential needs of an employee handbook. Afterward, more research will be presented on best practices of HR and how handbooks serve as a “contract” between employee and employer.

## Human resources

First, in order to understand the purpose of human resource functions, human resources need to be defined. HR departments serve as the foundation of employment practices, “HR departments are typically responsible for a number of activities, including employee recruitment, training and development, performance appraisal, and rewarding” (Rihan, 1998, p. 1). Within these activities, HR has certain functions to operate and maintain a successful workplace environment. Within these functions, a crucial segment is the implementation of an employee handbook. The employee handbook serves as a guideline for employers and employees, “It provides guidance and information related to the organization’s history,

mission, values, policies, procedures and benefits in a written format. It is also viewed as a means of protecting the employer against discrimination or unfair treatment claims” (Society for Human Resource Management, n.d.). Presenting this information to employees allows for the establishment of expectations to follow in order to stay in compliance with the goals of the organization.

### **History of employee handbooks**

Employee handbooks are a tool that HR departments have used since the 1920s. During this time, handbooks were used as a communication tool to allow employees to refer to information regarding sick leave, retirement, and fringe benefit procedures (Brady, 1993). During the 1960s-1980s, employee handbooks began to expand into a document that communicated more than compensatory benefits. It would later become more of an “end all, be all” document outlining information to protect employees from inappropriate termination from the employer and employers from disgruntled past employee lawsuits. Today, an employee handbook has a similar purpose but has continued to expand to allow for organizations to stay current with laws and legislation. An employee handbook serves as a commitment between employee and employer. An employee has to agree to certain conditions in order for the employer to finalize benefits and pay. According to *Employee Handbooks and Policy Statements: From Gratuities to Contracts and Back Again* (2017):

"These handbooks, which detail an employer's personnel rules and expectations, are more than mere gratuities. Employers distribute them in order to obtain certain benefits in the context of an ongoing employment relationship. The handbooks also may create legitimate expectations among the workforce. Accordingly, courts in the vast majority of jurisdictions now recognize that, in appropriate circumstances, an employer's promise of job security in a handbook is a legally enforceable obligation." (Befort, 2017, p. 328)

Employees have the right to know what is expected in each job position. This is why many organizations choose to have a handbook. However, there are disadvantages and advantages to an employee handbook.

### **Disadvantages and advantages of employee handbooks**

Smith and Harris (2014) outline two key disadvantages to employee handbooks. The first disadvantage is a reduction in flexibility. When an organization lays out its policies and procedures in a binding document, it places the company within specific boundaries. The only way for these boundaries to be flexible is to include revision statements and disclaimers. The second disadvantage is that “...it creates a responsibility on the part of

the company to ensure compliance with its own policies, as well as uniform managerial enforcement,” (Smith & Harris, 2014, p. 73) Although uniform managerial enforcement should not necessarily be labeled as a disadvantage, there are downfalls with this concept.

Abiding to the employee handbook means that above average employees can be punished or even terminated. For example, in a sales environment, organizations thrive on employees who generate the most revenue for the company. If a handbook states that all employees receive three warnings before being terminated and a high sales employee receives those three warnings, that employee must then be terminated. This is not cost effective for the company. Even with disadvantages, the need for an employee handbook is critical.

Although having a handbook is not federally mandated, it is always best practice for an organization to have a set of guidelines outlined in an employee handbook. According to an article by Paycor (n.d.), a human capital management (HCM) software company, there are eight reasons an organization should have an employee handbook:

1. Outlines an organization's philosophy, structure, culture, and mission
2. Sets a standard for employees and allows employees to know expectations
3. Informs employees what the organization is expected to do for the employee
4. Allows company policies to be clearly communicated to employees
5. Ensures employees know what benefits are offered
6. Allows an organization to be in compliance with state and federal laws regarding HRM
7. Helps an organization to be protected against employee claims
8. Shows employees where to turn for help

Although Paycor is a reputable company, every organization should have its own reasons to have an employee handbook. However, research shows that the majority of small business owners do not believe handbooks are necessary. According to *The ABCs of Employee Handbooks for Entrepreneurs (2003)*, 60% of business owners stated that the organization did not have an employee handbook, and 53% of business owners did not see a purpose in having one. This survey was conducted with 30 entrepreneurs with organizations ranging from 7 to 61 employees (Jawahar & Gavin, 2003).

### **What makes an effective employee handbook?**

As stated above, employee handbooks are not federally mandated. Organizations can make the decision not to utilize this HR tool. Regardless, of the majority of small organizations not seeing the need for an employee handbook, most organizations should use this tool. Large

HR departments see the significance in having an effective employee handbook. However, what constitutes an effective handbook?

An effective employee handbook will have several key components. Most components consist of policies within the organization. With an employee handbook, there are must-haves that every handbook should include and mistakes that every handbook should avoid. According to *Drafting An Effective Employee Handbook* (Smith & Harris, 2014, p. 75), there are seven key components to an employee handbook:

1. Welcome statement
2. At-will statement
3. Contract disclaimer and right to revise
4. Equal employment opportunity statement
5. Policy against unlawful harassment
6. Commitment to provide reasonable accommodations, where available, and to engage in the interactive process
7. Other policies that pertain to the organization

With these must-haves, there are also mistakes to avoid while drafting an employee handbook. While mistakes are dependent on the organization, there are common mistakes that are made frequently.

One of the most crucial actions for HR departments to take regarding the employee handbook is to make sure employees sign an acknowledgment form. An acknowledgment form is a formal document that employees sign acknowledging that they have read the employee handbook. According to Brady, “new employees should be given an acknowledgment form which states that they have received the handbook, will refer to it for company rules, regulations and policies, and understand that the handbook is not a contract, and that the employment relationship is at-will” (Brady, 1993, p. 35).

### **Revisions of employee handbooks**

Although revisions are necessary, there are issues that pertain to revisions. One common mistake that employers make is not having a process for updating the employee handbook (Forbes Leadership Council, 2021). New legislation is presented frequently and with new legislation, laws can change. When an organization decides to have a protocol for updating the employee handbook, this will integrate all new legislation and policy on a consistent basis. Organizations run the risk of being out of compliance if the handbook isn't updated to reflect current legislation.



Along with revisions, it is critical for a notice to be given about revisions. According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), it is best practice for human resource managers to give advance notice on policy revisions (How to Develop an Employee Handbook, n.d.). Although this notice is not mandated by law, it is beneficial to employee morale. An example provided by SHRM is when an organization decides to change the paid time off policy. This revision needs to be communicated to employees, so employees have an appropriate amount of time to be in compliance. Of course, there are certain policies that wouldn't affect a current employee. For example, any policies regarding new hire procedures would not require a notice of revision to employees.



**Figure 2** Arizona Revised Statutes, by Town of Clarkdale

### **Tips to consider**

Along with having a process for updating the employee handbook, there are other tips to consider when implementing a handbook. According to *Drafting an Effective Employee Handbook*, there are five tips that organizations should consider (Smith & Harris, 2014).

1. Seek input from higher-level managers
2. Have the employee handbook reviewed by legal counsel
3. Have employees sign an acknowledgment of receipt of the handbook
4. Keep your handbook current
5. Be prepared to answer questions about company policy

These tips are practical when implemented. Seeking input from higher-level management is crucial. Higher-level managers have the experience and knowledge in that particular field.

The higher-level managers are the ones in control of the organization and its reputation. When managers are included in the process, leadership is more uniform in regard to policy than managers who are not involved. Having a unified leadership team allows for an organization to be reputable to the public.

Along with involving higher management, having the employee handbook reviewed by legal counsel is always best practice. Legal counsel is beneficial for an organization to verify that the information contained in the employee handbook is in accordance with federal and state laws.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations have begun to offer more remote positions. Once companies were forced to operate outside of the office, managers and leaders began to realize that remote work is beneficial to employees and the employer. Since remote work is on the rise, this allows people to work for organizations in different states. HRM are not typically well versed in out-of-state laws and policies. Some states tend to be more supportive of employees and others tend to be more supportive of employers. Legal counsels can mitigate unnecessary litigations against an organization.

Legal counsel is important to a handbook, however, having the employee sign an acknowledgement form is equally as important. When an employee receives the organization's handbook, an acknowledgement form should be signed stating that the employee has received the handbook and will comply with all the contents within the handbook. When this form has been signed, it is important for the HRM to retain the acknowledgement form, "...this will be particularly helpful when disciplining an employee for violating a company policy, or down the road when the company is trying to prove that the employee was aware of the policy when defending a claim in court" (Smith, & Harris, 2014, p. 77).

As mentioned above keeping the handbook current is a best practice. An updated handbook ensures that the organization is complying with federal and state laws. The update also ensures that the employees are complying with the laws regulated by the state and federal government in regard to human resources.

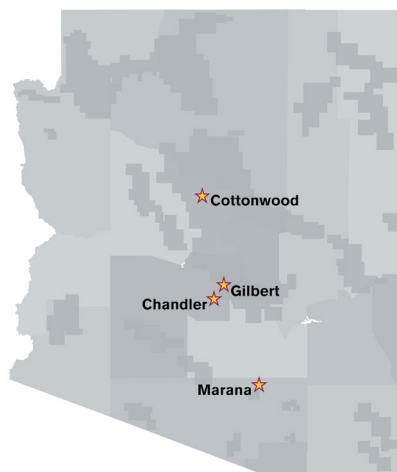
Making sure HRM can answer questions about policy is vital. For example, imagine an employee who has never held a serious job position before. This employee will present HRM with many questions regarding different policies and procedures. It is important that the organizations' HRM can answer those questions without hesitation.

## RESEARCH METHODS

During the research phase, the three topics of probationary period, employee benefits, and substance abuse policies were analyzed. The following research questions were used to produce the findings herein this project:

1. Which sections of the Clarkdale Employee Handbook are outdated and out of compliance with state and federal laws?
2. How can these outdated sections be updated in a way that both ensures the handbook meets compliance guidelines while also meeting the needs of town employees?
3. What other cities/towns in Arizona have completed a similar update? How did the employees respond, and how can the Town of Clarkdale best update its handbook?

The most vital research method used during this project is the literature review and analysis of peer community handbooks. The peer communities that were evaluated are the Town of Gilbert, City of Cottonwood, City of Chandler and the Town of Marana.



*Figure 3 Towns and cities used as reference for the purpose of this report*

These handbooks were analyzed for updates to policy and then compared to the current employee handbook for the Town of Clarkdale. Although these communities all abide by Arizona law, there were similarities and differences.

## FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

This project analyzes the rewrite of the employee handbook for Clarkdale, Arizona. Within the handbook, there are several sections. Public Affairs capstone students participating in Project Cities at Arizona State University were tasked to split up the sections. For the purposes of this project, the following sections will have recommendations for updates:

Section 1 (Probationary Period), Section 8 (Employee Benefits), and Section 12 (Substance Abuse Policy)

Community	Handbook Link
Town of Gilbert	Personnel Policies and Administrative Guidelines <a href="https://www.gilbertaz.gov/departments/human-resources">https://www.gilbertaz.gov/departments/human-resources</a>
City of Cottonwood	Employee Manual <a href="https://cottonwoodaz.gov/469/Employee-Resources">https://cottonwoodaz.gov/469/Employee-Resources</a>
Town of Marana	Personnel Policies and Directives <a href="https://www.maranaaz.gov/policies-and-directives">https://www.maranaaz.gov/policies-and-directives</a>
City of Chandler	Chandler Employee Personnel Rules <a href="https://www.chandleraz.gov/government/departments/human-resources/personnel-rules">https://www.chandleraz.gov/government/departments/human-resources/personnel-rules</a>

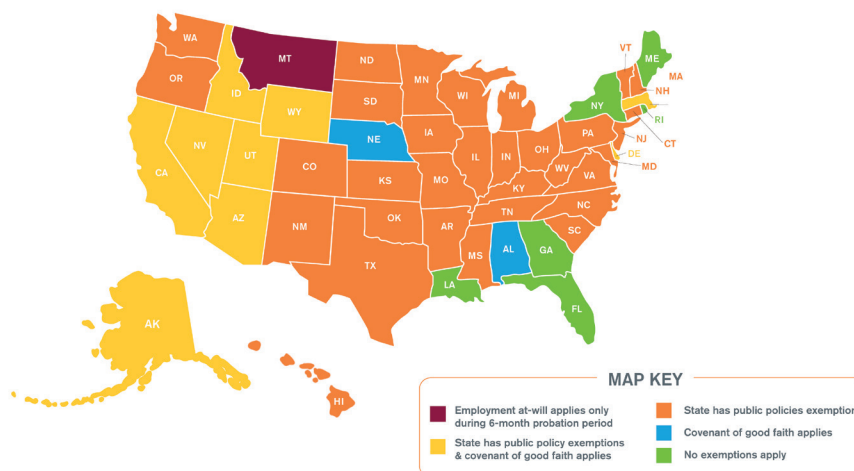
## Section 1: Probationary Period

Although the probationary period seems to define itself, there are several more components to this section. Research shows that the term “probationary period” should not be used in employment. According to SHRM, “their logic stems from the fact that some courts have ruled that the mere completion of such an initial evaluation period suggests express or implied contract obligations that make it more difficult for companies to discharge at will”, (Falcone, 2021). This term implies that after the specified probation time is over, employees do not have to comply with at-will employment. At-will employment is a term that employers use to define the type of employment offered. The term "at-will" means that an employer can terminate an employee without just cause. However, employers cannot terminate employment based on discriminatory factors such as race, gender, class, or other socially constructed identities.

Organizations should exclude the term probationary period and use other terms. According to SHRM, “labor experts recommend using terms like introductory, evaluation, training, initiation, eligibility, or orientation periods” (Falcone, 2021). Using these terms excludes organizations from legal issues during the specified employee evaluation time. Employees should know what is expected of them and be able to abide by those terms throughout the time of employment.

Currently, all 50 states have at-will employees. Although this type of employment mostly benefits the employer, there are benefits to employees as well. At-will employment status protects the employer, but it also gives an employee freedom over their career choices.

Without an at-will employment status, employees would be bound to an organization. However, the most beneficial aspect of at-will employment is that promotions are based on skill and merit. According to Indeed (n.d.), a popular career website, “This allows people the opportunity to advance quickly in their careers. If you have a strong skill set, but don’t have seniority, employment-at-will might be a good option for you to consider if you’re looking to level-up in professional title or salary”.



**Figure 4** At-will Employment States map, by Paycor, 2021, available at <https://www.paycor.com/resource-center/articles/employment-at-will-laws-by-state/>

### Town of Gilbert

Further research of the Gilbert employee handbook indicated that a probationary period policy does not exist. An orientation, training, or any introductory period is not offered within the employee handbook. However, this handbook defines the term “at-will” employee and discusses what that means to the employee:

“Employment with Gilbert is at-will and may be terminated by either the employee or Gilbert with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time. Exceptions to this at-will statement include certain sworn Fire and Police employees, in addition to certain non-exempt positions 14 designated as “covered” and hired prior to August 1, 2018” (Town of Gilbert, 2021, p. 13-14).

## City of Cottonwood

The City of Cottonwood does not have a section with information on a probationary period. Within the handbook, however, there is information on an orientation period. This suggests that the orientation period is an observation of an employee's work ethic and competency of the position held. This section discusses how Cottonwood can reject any applicant during this period without any reason. Additionally, the City also offers an extension of the orientation period by three months with approval.

## Town of Marana

While reviewing the Town of Marana, no probationary period was discussed. The term probationary employee is used and described as an employee who is still in the probationary term of employment.

## Section 8: Employee Benefits

Employee benefits are substantial in human resources. This topic is what can bring qualified employees to an organization. Without benefits, employers have little resources to use for recruitment strategies. As newer generations begin to join the professional workforce, it is important for an organization to stay up to date on benefits that attract the new generation.

Today, typical benefits for employers consist of medical and wellness coverage, professional development, parental leave, contributions to educational loans, and telecommuting. (Guide to Industrial-Organizational Psychology Degree Programs, 2021) A comprehensive benefits package is crucial for employees. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, telecommuting has achieved an all-time high in regard to employment. More companies are offering a hybrid work environment as part of the benefits.



*Figure 5 Hybrid Workplace*

One benefit that has gained recognition in the last few years is the offer of a wellness benefits package. For many years, medical benefits only consisted of medical, dental, and optometry. However, in today's society, the stigma of mental health is changing. In recent years, mental health was seen as a problem. Now, it seems the employers and organizations are starting to embrace the need for mental health benefits.

Although when discussing employee benefits the conversation leads to medical benefits, there are other benefits that are just as important. Listed in an employee handbook should be benefits pertaining to paid time off, holiday pay, vacation pay, information of jury duty and military leave, and various other topics organizations offer. As with any other section, it is important to comply with federal and state regulations regarding leave and benefits.

### **Town of Gilbert**

Research in the Gilbert handbook showed several listings of employee benefits. Although most of the benefits listed are standard, research indicated that more detail was given, and more benefits were provided to Gilbert employees in comparison to the Town of Clarkdale employees. Although the comparison is not equal because of the size of both organizations, the City of Gilbert had listed more employee benefits. Clarkdale's employee handbook contains a benefits section, however the benefits section was split into separate sections.

### **City of Cottonwood**

Within the Cottonwood employee handbook, employee benefits are spread over four different sections. Each section contains information on leaves and pay benefits. This is similar to the Clarkdale handbook.

### **Town of Marana**

Marana's handbook discusses employee benefits in Chapter 4. This handbook lays out various information regarding employee benefits. This section is a great section for the Town of Clarkdale to look at when revising the handbook. Not only is it well laid out, but it is also organized and easily understood.

## **Section 12: Substance Abuse Policy**

Substance abuse policy is a policy that can be seen as controversial and uncertain. There are certain states that have recently legalized the recreational use of marijuana. This legalization can seem to make policies tricky. However, the most important term to use during a substance abuse section is "illegal" drug.

Organizations should have a zero-tolerance for substance and alcohol abuse within the workplace. When employees show up for work, there are certain expectations implied.

When an employee is under the influence, injury is more likely and job performance can suffer. Organizations should create a unique substance abuse policy that aligns with the organization's mission and core values. When an employee signs the employee handbook acknowledgment form, that employee is agreeing to abide by the policies within.

Many HR departments have a formal policy for substance abuse. According to SHRM, 94% of HR departments in states where marijuana is legal have adopted a formal policy (SHRM, 2015). With a formal policy, employees are subject to reprimand with any violations. It is important for HR departments to list consequences and penalties for employees in violation of the substance abuse policy. However, one concept that proves difficult for organizations regardless of the legalization regulation is the process of testing for marijuana. Since marijuana stays in a person's bloodstream for up to 30 days, it can be difficult to prove an employee is under the influence. An employee could test positive for marijuana in a drug test and not have touched it while working. However, although recreational marijuana is legal in some states, federally it is still not legalized. This mandate means that employers do have the right to comply with federal law unless that specific state has protections enforced.

Although marijuana is the current topic of debate, other substances hinder a successful workforce. Substance abuse policy entails more than legal drugs and alcohol. Many employees may also be under the influence of drugs that are prescribed. Protecting an employee's right to medical privacy is important to the employee but also to the organization. Violating an employee's medical privacy by asking the wrong questions can open up an organization to legal litigations.

### **Town of Gilbert**

In the Town of Gilbert handbook, a substance abuse policy was not mentioned. However, there is a separate code of conduct that mentions the policy.

### **City of Chandler**

While analyzing peer community handbooks, researchers wanted a significant example of an effective substance abuse policy. Since this policy has the most changes for updating, researchers analyzed other communities, outside of Gilbert, Cottonwood, and Marana. One city that was reviewed was the City of Chandler, Arizona. Within this HR department, a policy exists that addresses the newly enacted Proposition 207. Instead of listing the substance abuse policy within the employee handbook, a secondary policy is presented in a stand-alone mater. This policy addresses specific positions and how the approval of Proposition 207 pertains to that position. Within this policy, there are three positions that require abstinence from marijuana regardless of the approval for recreational use in Arizona. These positions are police officer, firefighter/EMT, and any position requiring an employee to have a Commercial Drivers License (City of Chandler, 2018).



## City of Cottonwood

The Drug Free Work Place Policy (Section 40) provides a thorough review of Cottonwood's substance abuse policy. The section clearly uses the term "illegal" to describe what is acceptable and what is not.

"The term "illegal drugs" means any controlled substance, medication or other chemical substance that (1) is not legally obtainable; or (2) is legally obtainable, but is not legally obtained, is not being used legally or is not being used for the purpose(s) for which it was prescribed or intended by the manufacturer. Thus, illegal drugs may even include over the counter medications if they are not being used for the purposes intended by the manufacturer" (City of Cottonwood, 2007, p. 91).

## Town of Marana

According to the Town of Marana employee handbook, there is not a specific substance abuse policy. This handbook mentions a pre-employment drug test; however, it does not mention the hiring process.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Probationary period

A probationary period is important within an organization. Each employee deserves the right to have a time period of adjustment. Employers also have the right to have a time frame in which the organization expects an employee to be ready. However, research has shown that the term probationary period can serve as a loophole in wrongful termination lawsuits. It is best to use terms such as introductory period, orientation period, or simply "at-will" employment.

## Employee benefits

Although some benefits are federally and state-mandated, those benefits are not always known to someone who is entering the professional workforce for the first time. This event, the employee would not know what benefits he or she is entitled to. List all benefits, including federal and state-mandated, in the handbook to ensure employees have access to the information.

## **Substance abuse policy**

Recently in 2020, Arizona passed Prop 207, which legalized recreational marijuana use. Although organizations have the authority to still require drug testing for illegal drugs, testing for marijuana can be tricky since traces of it can be in a person's system for up to 30 days. This means that a person could test positive and not be under the influence at that time. Additionally, the recommendation for this policy involves adding that marijuana is still federally considered a Schedule 1 substance and that certain positions, such as a commercial truck driver, are still not allowed to use this drug.

However, the Town of Clarkdale should consider including that certain positions are exempt from the policy and are not allowed to partake in the use of marijuana, any legal drugs, or over-the-counter drugs that could impair that employee. The positions that should be held to the federal standard are police officer, firefighter/EMT, and positions that require a commercial driver's license.

## **Summary**

There are two recommendations for the Town of Clarkdale in regard to the employee handbook:

1. To update the employee handbook on a regular basis. Having an up-to-date employee handbook keeps the employee safe and the employer safe.
2. To include higher management into updating and recreating the handbook. This gets higher management involved in the process and allows each one to be more unified when situations with employees happen.

## **CONCLUSION**

Employee handbooks are essential to all organizations. Although handbooks are not mandatory, it is crucial for an organization to be successful in employee/employer relationships. The Town of Clarkdale has an employee handbook that is resourceful and full of content that applies to what employees need to know about this organization. As research has indicated, having an employee handbook is important but it is also important to keep that handbook up to date. According to the Town of Clarkdale, several sections were out of date.

Project Cities requested PAF 509 students to select sections of the employee handbook and recommend actions for the Town of Clarkdale. The sections that were chosen for this project were the probationary period, employee benefits, and substance abuse policy. Outlined in this project are recommendations for Clarkdale to consider. Also included in this project is the recommendation for the overall handbook. As long as Clarkdale continues to improve its process of updating the employee handbook, the town will continue to be in compliance with HR best practices.

## REFERENCES

- Organizational Psychology Degrees (2021, August 11). 5 ways employee benefits packages have changed over the years. *Guide to Industrial-Organizational Psychology Degree Programs*. Retrieved April 25, 2022, from <https://www.organizationalpsychologydegrees.com/lists/5-ways-employee-benefits-packages-changed-years/>
- Baxter, E. (2020, November 03). Arizona approves Prop 207 marijuana legalization initiative. Phoenix New Times. Retrieved February 3, 2022, from <https://www.phoenixnewtimes.com/marijuana/arizona-approves-prop-207-marijuana-legalization-initiative-11510231>
- Befort, S. F. (1991). Employee Handbooks and the Legal Effect of Disclaimers. *Indus. Rel. LJ*, 13, 326.
- Befort, S. F. (2017). Employee Handbooks and Policy Statements: From Gratuities to Contracts and Back Again. *Emp. Rts. & Emp. Pol'y J.*, 21, 307.
- Brady, T. (1993). Employee handbooks: Contracts or empty promises? *Management Review*, 82(6), 33. <http://login.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/employee-handbooks-contracts-empty-promises/docview/206699069/se-2?accountid=4485>
- City of Chandler. (2018). *Chandler employee personnel rules*. City of Chandler. Retrieved March 27, 2022, from <https://www.chandleraz.gov/government/departments/human-resources/personnel-rules>
- City of Cottonwood. (2007). *Employee Manual*. <https://cottonwoodaz.gov/756/Employee-Manual>
- Falcone, P. (2021, July 6). Legal implications of probationary periods. SHRM. Retrieved April 25, 2022, from <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/legal-implications-of-probationary-periods.aspx>
- How to Develop an Employee Handbook. (n.d.). Retrieved May 12, 2022, from <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/how-to-guides/pages/developemployeehandbook.aspx>
- Jawahar, I. M., & Gavin, S. (2003). The ABCS of employee handbooks for entrepreneurs. *The Entrepreneurial Executive*, 8, 1.
- Leadership Council, F. (2021, April 27). Council post: 15 common employee handbook mistakes to avoid. Forbes. Retrieved April 10, 2022, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2021/04/27/15-common-employee-handbook-mistakes-to-avoid/?sh=793ba553338e>
- Paycor. (n.d.). 8 reasons you should have a company employee handbook. Retrieved February 20, 2022, from <https://www.paycor.com/resource-center/articles/8-reasons-you-should-have-a-company-employee-handbook/>

- Policies for Marijuana Use in Workplace. SHRM. (2015). Retrieved April 25, 2022, from <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/trends-and-forecasting/research-and-surveys/Pages/default.aspx>
- Rihan, I. (1998). What is human resources management. Erisim Adresi: [https://www.academia.edu/7775792/What\\_is\\_Human\\_Resources\\_Management\\_](https://www.academia.edu/7775792/What_is_Human_Resources_Management_)
- Smith, K. J., & Harris, L. M. (2014). Drafting an effective employee handbook. *Employment Relations Today*, 41(1), 71-79.
- Town of Gilbert, (2021). *Personnel Policies and Administrative Guidelines*. <https://www.gilbertaz.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/28572/63759551254340000>
- Understanding the advantages and disadvantages of employment-at-will. Indeed Career Guide. (n.d.). Retrieved April 25, 2022, from <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/advantages-of-employment-at-will>
- Wolf, D. J. (2009). EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK "Must Haves". *Family Advocate*, 32(2), 10-12. <http://login.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/employee-handbook-must-haves/docview/217970258/se-2?accountid=4485>

*To access the original student reports, additional materials, and resources, visit:*

[links.asu.edu/PCClarkdaleEmployeeHandbook22S](https://links.asu.edu/PCClarkdaleEmployeeHandbook22S)

*This page was intentionally left blank.*

# **PART 5:**

## **Computer, Email, & Confidentiality Policies**

**ESTABLISHING COMPUTER, SOCIAL MEDIA, & EMAIL POLICIES TO  
SUPPORT INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL EMPLOYEE COLABORATION**

**PAF 509: PUBLIC AFFAIRS CAPSTONE**

**SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS**

**FACULTY: MALCOLM GOGGIN &  
LADAWN LINGARD**

**CAPSTONE STUDENT: SASHA THOMAS**

# **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

## **Faculty**

Malcolm Goggin

LaDawn Lingard

## **Students**

Gabriel Alvarez

Callie West

Katy Hendricks

Sasha Thomas

## **Editors**

Alison Almand

Shraddha Bejgam

Julia Colbert

Anne Reichman

## **Clarkdale Staff Team**

Randi Stephens

# INTRODUCTION

Arizona has an abundance of community-focused localities that place importance on transparency and adaptation of growth within its administrative systems. The Town of Clarkdale, Arizona, is a local hub for economic development with a deep mining history and adaptation to change. The Town of Clarkdale now has a labor force centered predominantly working in educational services, agriculture, healthcare & social assistance, and public service. As a town with a robust public service workforce, adaptation and transparency are critical to the success of its development.

The need for employee-manager transparency is key to developing a robust workforce. Through this transparency, there is a precedent for policy and procedure manuals to regulate all employees within the public sector equitably. This is seen at all levels of government, including local communities, both counties and municipalities. As governments continue to provide transparency through materials such as employee handbooks and human resource training, there is an expectation of evident process-based trust through accessibility and responsiveness of all parties (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006). An adaptation of both process-based and Institutional-based trust comes in the form of creating an accessible space of current updated employee procedures and policy to create environments for all parties. Employee handbooks have a clear directive to create efficiency through information and engagement through effective communication. Put simply, the employee handbook stands as the first method of resolving questions, concerns, and general information.



*Figure 1 Human Resources Building, by Town of Clarkdale*

Expectations vary depending on the organization and municipality; thus, the employee handbook stands as the equalizer of the entity's human resource management policy. A well-written employee handbook includes the at-will status of employment, defines communities' policies, identifies key performance expectations, facilitates discipline when the policy has been violated, and outlines employer and employee rights (Smith & Harris, 2014). Through an expensive review of employee and employer relations, employee handbooks should be analyzed often for changes in systems and expectations and an adaptation to an ever-changing society.



A policy that has been updated and changed throughout technological and social advances includes the computer, social media, and confidentiality policies. As local level governments adapt to changing expectations from citizens, states, and other stakeholders, employee policy is bound to adapt concurrently. As a result of a consistent and transparent review of employee expectations and employee, handbook changes comes the apparent transparency of local governments to create process-based and institutional-based trust.

## **Project scope**

The Town of Clarkdale's public service and local government is in the process of reviewing its employee policies and employee handbook. Included in this review is the chance to create institutional-based trust through its transparency of renewed expectations. The Town of Clarkdale has a rich history with a diverse population. The Town's 2019 population was 4,271, with a 0.305% yearly growth rate and a median household income of \$49,383. It is important to note that the median age for the town's population is 57 years old, signifying a high retiree population rate. Accordingly, there were 1,701 employed individuals as of 2019 data (Data USA, 2022). As the Town continues to develop its working-age population, employer policies will need to advance.

Project Cities, an ASU-run university-community partnership, partnered with the Town of Clarkdale to review the employee handbook. The current leadership is dissatisfied with the latest version of the employee policy handbook, as it does not serve the function of maintaining up-to-date policies and procedures. While many of the practices and methods introduced in the current handbook are of use, numerous policies need analysis with a conditional understanding of context and adaptation of methods used. This review will analyze two sections in the employee handbook by providing recommendations on new methods and policy recommendations to include transparency and accessibility for employees better. The project will review two specific sections of the Town's employee handbook: Section 23, Computer, Social Media, Email Policy, and Section 26, Confidentiality and Confidential Information. The sections in the review are vital to creating transparent expectations and documenting new policy that has adapted to technology and society.

## **Research questions**

This project will focus on two main research questions pertaining to the adaptation and review of the Town's current employee handbook:

1. How can the Town of Clarkdale's employee handbook better serve the purpose of transparency and accessibility for all employees?
2. How does the Town of Clarkdale's employee handbook compare to similar towns regarding computers, social media, email policy, and confidentiality policy?

A case study analysis will compare and contrast Clarkdale's current employee handbook policies with other similar towns' employee handbooks. Recommendations will be presented to serve the employer-employee expectations better and focus on transparency to result in institutional-based trust within the local government.

## **Literature review**

Current literature on the development and review of employee handbooks at a local government level is minimal due to its scope. A review of general findings and further inquiry into process-based and institutional-based trust in e-governance will be defined.

### **Employee handbook ideals**

Smith and Harris (2014) discuss the need for practical employee handbooks and fundamental ideals employers should aim to cover within the handbook. The main advantage seen in the writing covers the obvious liability concerns that employee handbooks often reference. This may be seen through the coverage of employer expectations, time and leave reporting under the Family and Medical Leave Act, equal employment definitions, unlawful practices within the workspace, and beyond. The coverage of these topics is the baseline for clear communication from employers to employees on restrictions and compliance topics. Additionally, employee handbooks provide all employees with a transparent understanding of role and duty expectations from workplace safety to computers, social media, and email policy. These topics are all needed to provide employers with clear boundaries of employment while maintaining a communicative directive with employees (Smith & Harris, 2014).

The promoted interest in the consistency of policy is another area of need for employee handbooks (Smith & Harris, 2014). Consistency looks specifically into how employee handbooks are presented and formatted consistently in policy. Employer policy on a specific topic must be regulated and enacted towards all employees regardless of managerial status to create consistency.

### **Transparency in governance**

As governments continue to organize and disseminate information, a clear and thought-out process is necessary. Turilli and Floridi (2009) discuss the ethics of information transparency which is an elaborate process of pro-ethical conditions. This is seen through governments' process to create access to information for both employees and citizens. The research looked specifically at the ethical implications of human choices and actions that compose the information production process that can be achieved through regulatory methods (Turilli & Floridi, 2009).

This can be interpreted towards employee policy and the content of employee handbooks that define the policies and procedures consistent with the employer's systems. In this methodology, the product of refinement in transparency sees improved accessibility while also adapting policy for changing times (Turilli & Floridi, 2009). Additionally, improved accessibility is to provide employees with clear directives on best practices and expectations that employers set forth.

### **Trust in government**

Employee policy and procedures convey a clear set of rules and regulations that maintain employee-employer trust. In this mindset, trust in government is needed at public service levels since there is an added dynamic of transparency and access expected from employees and citizens. Tolbert and Mossberger (2006) examine the need for trust in government and e-governance as a pronounced focus in the technology accessibility that is now a reality. Two instrumental practices for governments to maintain are process-based trust and institutional-based trust (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006).



*Figure 2 Stakeholder meeting with Project Cities participants at Town of Clarkdale*

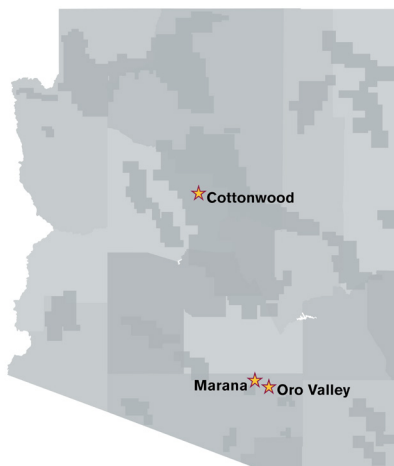
Process-based trust involves citizens and employees perceiving the government as responsive and accessible. Government is responsible for the improved communication and interactions with all stakeholders. This is seen through improved email and computer systems policies (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006). Making policy available to create a clear line of etiquette expected of employees regarding the use of computers as a tool and personal limitations of social media and email policy is critical. Accessibility is a crucial aspect of process-based trust. The information is available to all parties with minimal confusion. Increasing accessibility results in great familiarity with government through more frequent interactions, increasing process-based trust (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006).

Institutional-based trust relies on the government creating accessible information for citizens and employees by all means (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006). Once the information

is accessible, guidelines for institutional-based trust include promoting transparency in all information published, such as data, policies, laws, and contact information. Creating online searchable databases continues to create transparency in governance and begin to merge government with the idea of e-governance in a technology-driven era (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006).

## RESEARCH METHODS

Researching best practices and updated policies will recommend changes to Section 23 (Computer, Email, Internet and Social Media Policy) and Section 26 (Confidential Information). Methods used within this report will rely on a case study approach to analyzing Clarkdale's current employee handbook and comparing it to the employee handbooks of other municipalities. The qualitative approach will capture the contrasting efforts of the towns and cities to thoroughly analyze updated policy used in practice at local governmental levels. The case study approach will be presented by section analyzed per the Town of Clarkdale's current employee handbook. Each contrasting Town's policy will be introduced to provide suggestions for updates that may not be seen in the Town of Clarkdale's handbook.



*Figure 3 Towns and cities used as reference for the purpose of this report*

### Town of Marana

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates the Town of Marana's population as of April 1, 2020, at 51,908. While this population size is significantly larger than the Town of Clarkdale's, the Town has similar attributes regarding its employer policy related to the computer, social media, email policy, and the confidentiality policy. In contrast, the Town of Marana has a similar demographic makeup with a larger retiree population, with around 22% of all citizens over the age of 65 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021b). The Town of Marana has focused efforts on updating current employee policies and procedures. This precedent compares the Town

of Clarkdale's policies specific to renewing transparency and access to information for all parties involved.

## City of Cottonwood

The City of Cottonwood is the closest geographically to the Town of Clarkdale in this case study analysis. The need for contrasting yet similar towns is optimal as it gives greater justifications for the external validity of our research. Additionally, Cottonwood's demographic makeup is highly similar to Clarkdale's pertaining to the age of residents and the scale of public service employees. Cottonwood has a makeup of 33% of all residents being persons aged 65 years and over (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021a). As Cottonwood's population is over double Clarkdale, there have been significant improvements in transparency and accessibility of the information as it relates to employee policies and procedures.

## Town of Oro Valley

The Town of Oro Valley has a prominent human resources guide that is accessible in nature. The Town is notably larger than Clarkdale yet mirrors similar ideals for community growth. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates the Town of Oro Valley to have a population of residents aged 65 years or older at around 35% of all residents (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021c). Most similar in demographic makeup to the Town of Clarkdale, this once again highlights the promising external validity of the qualitative data collected for the purpose of this report. Oro Valley's extensive employee procedure and policies system are prominent and are the most up-to-date, making them valuable for evaluation.

The methods used in this report will focus on simply defining current policy shortcomings compared to other like towns within the state of Arizona. The sampling of qualitative information gathered will inform readers of current and contrasting policies in like-minded towns and cities. Recommendations will be presented with the analysis of the findings.

Community	Handbook Link
City of Cottonwood	Employee Manual <a href="https://cottonwoodaz.gov/469/Employee-Resources">https://cottonwoodaz.gov/469/Employee-Resources</a>
Town of Marana	Personnel Policies and Directives <a href="https://www.maranaaz.gov/policies-and-directives">https://www.maranaaz.gov/policies-and-directives</a>
Town of Oro Valley	Town of Oro Valley Personnel Policies <a href="https://www.orovalleyaz.gov/Government/Departments/Human-Resources">https://www.orovalleyaz.gov/Government/Departments/Human-Resources</a>

The analysis will look at the Town of Clarkdale's employee handbook to better address process-based and institutional-based trust with the government, the employees, and citizens.

## FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

Each community's information will be sampled through all publicly available documents and data. This will address the process-based and institutional-based trust elements in all cases. The Town of Marana, the Town of Cottonwood, and the Town of Oro Valley will be the critical cases used to contrast the current policies of the Town of Clarkdale.

### Section 23: Computer, Email, Internet and Social Media Policy

The Town of Clarkdale's current employee handbook cites numerous protocols pertaining to the topic, including expectations, procedures, and use policy. The current handbook, as it stands, focuses on computer use, social media use, and email policy as one subsection of the handbook, condensed with subsections. The employee handbook provides an essential landscape of how employees should maintain privacy and concern for technological standards. The handbook proceeds to include a purpose for the policy, the scope of the policy, the philosophy of the policy, and general policies. In total, Section 23 consists of nine pages on policies that vary in scope while detailing numerous procedures.

#### City of Cottonwood

The City of Cottonwood has an employee handbook with lesser reviewed sections on the computer, social media, and email policy. Cottonwood's manual was updated as of 2008, yet received a review of redlined materials later in the year, which had not been disclosed. The City's section on computer use is separated from the Town's section on internet and email use policy (Cottonwood Department of Human Resources, 2007). This is used as a method to create a divide between the computer policy being treated as equipment policy and the social media and email policy as software and online facilities monitoring.



*Figure 4 Cottonwood Municipal Court, by AzCourtHelp*

The method of separating the policies in a clear directive creates a transparent directive for employees to understand the boundaries between computer use and social media & email policy. Additionally, the definitive separation of sections speaks to the cybersecurity of the devices as it pertains to the employer's discretion. While the City of Cottonwood's employee handbook is not currently up to date, the transparency of information to create institutional-based trust is paramount to employer-employee relations. In all, Cottonwood effectively delivers employee policy and procedures through the practice of defining expectations and differentiating practices.

### **Town of Marana**

The Town of Marana defines its computer, social media, and email policy (Policy 5-4) with a different organization within its handbook. The Town treats the use of communication systems and equipment differently than the social media policy. This policy framework conveys communication systems and equipment as integrated with privacy and confidentiality policy. Expectations of privacy are included in electronic storage and communication systems such as copiers, computers, software, and telephones (Marana Department of Human Resources, 2022). The Town enables employees to define the computer policy as equipment policy and differentiating communication systems as a user policy.



*Figure 5 Marana Municipal Complex, by Tucson Weekly*

Marana creates definitions of permitted and prohibited use of electronic storage and communication systems through explicit language that guides readers step-by-step. Additional employee responsibilities are listed as a section for the Town to include additional policy as technology develops and moves beyond the scope of current expectations. The social media use section for the Town of Marana's employee handbook is entirely separate as an accessible administrative directive that can be accessed publicly on the Town's department of the human resources web page. The recently updated social media use administrative directive strictly defines the purpose and confines of social media use

pertaining to employees' use of social media in relation to the Town. There are sections for departments affected, references for public records laws, definitions, policies & procedures, employee requirements, and confidentiality policy (Rozema, 2022). The highly detailed and organized administrative directive includes specifics on restricted access platforms and limits within the confines of social media administrators. The Town of Marana's highly effective organizational method of creating new sections of the employee handbook while redefining standard practices within the computer, social media, and email policy, provides employees and citizens with a clear and concise directive on within the human resources department is achieved.

### **Town of Oro Valley**

Oro Valley's employee handbook and personnel policy were the most accessible within this case study. Oro Valley's use of public use data and streamlining the access of the information in the employee handbook was integral to the research collected. Oro Valley's computer usage, email use, retention & storage, and internet policy (Personnel Policy 26) was a four-page section focused on the multi-element of policies.

The purpose was provided and gave employees directives on the current policies and equipment. References to public records laws were provided to allow for transparency in limitations of policy between employers and employees. Uniquely, retention and disposition of public records were discussed within this section as most employees currently access public records through computer equipment and employer-held internet. Usage policies and responsibilities cover numerous liability concerns and action restrictions (Town of Oro Valley, 2014).

Integration of privacy and confidentiality policy was noticeable within the Town of Oro Valley's employee handbook. While creating new sections for clear policy procedures for employees, the confidentiality policy addresses concerns of transmission and storage of information, creating a straightforward practice for employees to implement. Oro Valley's personnel policy content is optimal for creating process-based and institutional-based transparency through the use of online databases for the employee handbook and integrating traditional confidentiality sections within the computer, social media, and email policy section.

### **Section 26: Confidential Information**

Clarkdale's current confidentiality information section is exceptionally streamlined. It consists of a paragraph describing disclosure of information, property of information, and terms of agreeing to such confidentiality agreement upon acceptance of employment. This section does cover the basic requirements set forth by the National Labor Relations Act of 1935.



The National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) protects employees from numerous activities but specifically outlines requirements on public records and the destruction of public records (National Labor Relations Act, 1935). The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) advises three significant confidentiality policies to be included within an employee handbook (Smith, 2015).

1. The requirement to not discuss customer or employee information outside of work
2. Do not disclose proprietary or confidential information
3. Never publish or disclose another's confidential or proprietary information

These guidelines will be used in the research to better address recommendations for the Town of Clarkdale's employee handbook in Section 26 on Confidentiality of Information.

### **City of Cottonwood**

The City of Cottonwood's confidentiality policy differs from other towns in the aspect that a specific policy for Confidentiality Policy is not given its own section within the handbook. Alternatively, the Town addresses confidentiality in all sub-sections of the handbook that may handle this subject, sections like addressing ethics, workplace violence, anti-harassment, and anti-discrimination policy (Cottonwood Department of Human Resources, 2007). Confidentiality policy specifically pertaining to communication systems and email policy can be found in the Ethics section, which covers numerous sub-policies of expectations of employment. This framework creates a less transparent space on the topic of confidentiality due to the nature of dissecting the topic into numerous fields. The City of Cottonwood's confidentiality section is non-traditional and yet has been recently reviewed as of 2021.

### **Town of Marana**

The Town of Marana continues to create transparent information, which creates institutional-based trust through the clear discernment of confidentiality policy within the employee handbook. As previously cited, the confidentiality sections of the Marana employee handbook are integrated with the use of communication systems and equipment policy (Policy 5-4). The purpose of integrating the confidentiality policy within the use of communication systems and equipment policy is to better inform employees of the expectations at hand. Section 5-4-1 clearly demonstrates the expectation of no privacy while also detailing permitted and prohibited uses of equipment and communication methods. This framework for applying a confidentiality policy within an employee handbook promotes transparency and accessibility to information for all parties involved.

### **Town of Oro Valley**

The Town of Oro Valley's confidentiality policy is not clearly defined as its own section within the personnel policy. Similar to the Town of Cottonwood, confidentiality policy is mentioned

within subsections that pertain to the specific topic. Oro Valley's personnel policy is the subject of public records, retention of records, and disposition of public records. This is an extension seen similar to what is seen within the current Clarkdale handbook. In terms of transparency, Oro Valley provides straightforward access to personnel policy through the public use data system.

## Summary

After reviewing the three similar town and city handbooks, it is clear that there are defining differences between layout, content, and policy. Computer, social media, and email policy see the most considerable variation due to technology advances, software used by different localities, and overall dissemination of information. Cottonwood, Marana, and Oro Valley have numerous findings within their policies to recommend qualitative change for the Town of Clarkdale's handbook.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Computer, social media, and email policies

Creating new defined sections to better address computer, social media, and email policy will better address transparency and accessibility concerns. Similar to the Town of Marana, **categorizing communication systems and policy sections** will better address social media concerns. Likewise, continuing a section on computer and internet policy as used in terms of equipment will better advance expectations from the employer to employees. Creating categories of equipment and communication systems will not only create a more streamlined policy system but also allow for future adaptation of the policy as technology develops. **Mirroring policy content to Oro Valley's Personnel Policy 26 and Marana's policy section 5-6 by creating definitions and references section would address transparency concerns within Section 23 of Clarkdale's current handbook.** A definitions section allows for all parties to communicate specifics clearly and effectively on the terms and verbiage. References sections often comply with NLRB standpoints to allow for further context on the reasonings of specific policies (Smith, 2015).

Social media sections of the Clarkdale handbook are due for review due to outdated practices. Social media representation by the Town should be clearly outlined as well as the purpose for social media presence through all platforms including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and Yelp. In sum, adjusting content, creating new sections, and clearly defining verbiage and expectation will mirror cities and towns as examined through this research. As discussed in the literature, to better ensure institutional-based and process-based trust, there must be a consistent effort by localities to create accessible and transparent information (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006). **Clarkdale can better address transparency and accessibility of information by creating a public use database on the Town's website that**

hold all human resource documents, including the employee handbook. As seen through the Town of Oro Valley, the public use data as seen in the personnel policy handbook provided context for research and findings to be conducted. Additionally, this is seen as a best practice by the NLRB to increase transparent employer-employee relations (Smith, 2015).

## Confidentiality

Confidentiality is paramount to success in all businesses. In that perspective, the Town of Clarkdale can expand on previous confidentiality and confidential information policy sections. Detailed by the NLRB, all three key points, (1) The requirement not to discuss customer or employee information outside of work, (2) do not disclose proprietary or confidential information, and (3) never publish or disclose another's confidential or proprietary information, should be elaborated upon within the handbook (Smith, 2015). By clearly defining the three points of the NLRB confidentiality policy, employees will be given optimal communication on expectations and boundaries.

As seen in the Town of Marana, confidentiality is persistent through policy 5-4-1, which dictates expectations of privacy, permitted use, and prohibited use. This recommended framework will comply with NLRB stances and continue to create transparency of information between all parties. Through the implementation of adjustments to policy content and policy sections, employees will be provided with clear expectations promoting both institution-based and process-based trust.

## CONCLUSION

Employee handbooks provide transparency in policy and expectations from the employer. As seen through the numerous cities and towns, there is a motivation for stakeholders to create other institutional-based trust through accessibility and transparency of all government information. This report completed an analysis of the current employee handbook for the Town of Clarkdale. While the Town of Clarkdale's handbook does provide insight on policy, there is significant room for improvement. The data collected was qualitative data which was synthesized using a case study approach using cities and towns. The cases of Cottonwood, Marana, and Oro Valley provided clear insight into current practices and handbooks that are used at numerous localities within the state of Arizona. The analysis concluded that there are opportunities for content, formatting, and policy improvements to Section 26 and Section 23 of the Clarkdale Handbook in order to provide transparency and accessibility of information for all involved parties.

## REFERENCES

- Cottonwood Department of Human Resources. (2007). *Employee Manual*. <https://cottonwoodaz.gov/756/Employee-Manual>
- Data USA. (2022). *Clarkdale, AZ*. Data USA. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/clarkdale-az>
- Marana Department of Human Resources. (2022). *Policies and Directives*. Town of Marana. <https://www.maranaaz.gov/policies-and-directives>
- Oro Valley Department of Human Resources. (n.d.). *Personnel Policies*. Town of Oro Valley. <https://www.orovalleyaz.gov/Government/Departments/Human-Resources>
- Rozema, T. (2022). *Administrative Directive: Social Media Use*. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/54cc191ce4b0f886f4762582/t/624db6e01121486aef2ad32d/1649260256629/AD+20220406+New+Social+Media+Use+AD+%2800080296xA96C7%29.pdf>
- Smith, A. (2015). *NLRB General Counsel Offers Guidance on Employee Handbooks*. SHRM. <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/labor-relations/pages/nlr-general-counsel-report.aspx>
- Smith, K. J., & Harris, L. M. (2014). Drafting an Effective Employee Handbook: Questions-And Answers. *Employment Relations Today*, 41(1), 71–79. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ert.21446>
- Tolbert, C., & Mossberger, K. (2006). *The Effects of E-Government on Trust and Confidence in Government*. 66(3), 354–369.
- Town of Clarkdale. (2017). *Personnel Policies and Procedure Manual*. [https://www.clarkdale.az.gov/Personnel%20Policy%20and%20Proc.%20Manual%20\(2017.07.01\).pdf](https://www.clarkdale.az.gov/Personnel%20Policy%20and%20Proc.%20Manual%20(2017.07.01).pdf)
- Town of Oro Valley. (2014). *Personnel Policy: Computer Usage; Email Use, Retention, & Storage; and Internet Policy*. <https://www.orovalleyaz.gov/files/assets/public/documents/human-resources/policies-and-procedures/personnel-policy-26-computer-usage-email-and-internet.pdf>
- Turilli, M., & Floridi, L. (2009). The ethics of information transparency. *Ethics and Information Technology*, 11(2), 105–112. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10676-009-9187-9>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2021a). *U.S. Census Bureau: Cottonwood city, Arizona*. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/cottonwoodcityarizona>
- U.S. Census Bureau. (2021b). *U.S. Census Bureau: Marana town, Arizona*. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/maranatownarizona/POP010220#POP010220>

U.S. Census Bureau. (2021c). *U.S. Census Bureau: Oro Valley town, Arizona*. United States Census Bureau. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/orovalleytownarizona>

National Labor Relations Act, United States Congress, 29 (1935). <https://www.nlr.gov/guidance/key-reference-materials/national-labor-relations-act>

*To access the original student reports, additional materials, and resources, visit:*

[links.asu.edu/PCClarkdaleEmployeeHandbook22S](https://links.asu.edu/PCClarkdaleEmployeeHandbook22S)