



NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT  
OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

## New Jersey Department of Children and Families Policy Manual

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| Manual:     | DCF      | DCF Wide   | Effective Date: |
| Volume:     | III      | Administrative Policies  |                 |
| Chapter:    | A        | Human Resources  | 7-25-2012       |
| Subchapter: | 1        | Human Resources  |                 |
| Issuance:   | 001-2012 | <b>Consensual Personal Relationships and Relative Relationships in the Workplace</b> |                 |

### I. PURPOSE:

To alert supervisors to their obligation to report consensual personal and relative relationships with subordinates to a designated individual so that appropriate steps may be taken if necessary to address any implications for the workplace as a result of the relationship.

### II. SCOPE:

This Policy has Department-wide applicability.

### III. AUTHORITY

N.J.S.A. 9:3A-7g

N.J.S.A. 52:13D-12 et seq.

New Jersey Uniform Ethics Code (February 2011)

N.J.S.A. 10.5-1 et seq.

N.J.A.C. 4A:7-3.1

### IV. DEFINITIONS

Consensual Personal Relationship means marriage, domestic partner or civil union status, co-habitation, engagement, dating and/or any other romantic or sexual relationship.

Relative means an individual's spouse/civil union or domestic partner or the individual's or spouse's/civil union or domestic partner's parent, child, brother, sister, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, grandparent, grandchild, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepparent, stepchild, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother or half-sister, whether the relative is

related to the individual's spouse/civil union or domestic partner by blood, marriage/civil union or adoption.

Supervisor means the individual who directly oversees the work performed by a subordinate and who exercises authority with regard to personnel actions including, but not limited to, hiring, termination, granting of time off, discipline, consideration or recommendation for promotion or discipline, performance reviews, assignments, or work hours.

## **V. POLICY**

Consensual personal and relative relationships between supervisors and subordinates present workplace issues which may implicate the State Policy Prohibiting Discrimination in the Workplace ("State Anti-Discrimination Policy") and the State Conflict of Interest Law. Such relationships, which are private in nature, often have unintended consequences for the workplace.

The State Anti-Discrimination Policy and Conflict of Interest Law prohibit favoritism based on a relative or personal consensual relationship in any aspect of the work environment or personnel actions, including but not limited to, hiring, termination, granting time off, consideration/recommendation for promotion or discipline, performance review, assignments or compensation.

A state officer or employee of the Department of Children and Families shall not supervise, or exercise authority with regard to personnel actions over a relative or individual with whom they are in a consensual personal relationship.

All supervisors shall comply with the disclosure requirements set forth in Part VI, below.

## **VI. DISCLOSURE**

The Department requires that a supervisor who is or becomes involved in any consensual personal relationship or relative relationship must promptly report that relationship directly to the Department Ethics Liaison Officer ("ELO"). The regular chain of command is not to be used in the interest of preserving as much confidentiality as possible. The burden to report lies with the supervisor. The ELO shall maintain confidentiality to the extent possible and practicable.

Upon receiving notice of the relationship, the ELO, in consultation with appropriate management personnel, shall address the information. This may include, but is not limited to, modifying reporting relationships or transferring any of the employees involved. Any action taken will be documented by the ELO.

Failure to give proper notice of a covered relative or consensual personal relationship may result in discipline, up to and including termination, and the denial of legal

representation and indemnification by the State in the event that a lawsuit is filed having a connection with the relative or consensual personal relationship.

Additionally, all supervisors shall complete and file a Supervisory Conflicts of Interest Certification annually or as otherwise directed by the Department Ethics Liaison Officer (ELO).

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Date

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Allison Blake, Ph.D., L.S.W.  
Commissioner