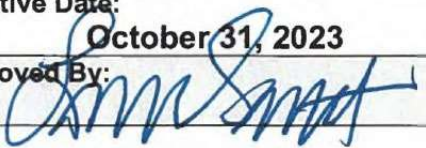




**County of Los Angeles
Department of Human Resources
POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND
GUIDELINES**

Subject: NEPOTISM AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS	Policy Number: 818	Pages: 5
	Effective Date: October 31, 2023	
	Approved By: 	

POLICY

It is the County's policy to ensure that workplace decisions are merit-based and free from any real or apparent conflict of interest, favoritism, or preferential treatment. Therefore, all County departments must make reasonable efforts to prevent nepotism and potential conflicts of interest by regulating the employment and assignment of relatives and certain personal relationships.

Employees shall not supervise or be placed in positions of interrelated trust with a relative and/or someone with whom they have a personal relationship as defined by this policy. At the time of hiring, promotion, reassignment, or when circumstances change that would require disclosure under this policy, employees must disclose in writing to their Departmental Human Resources Manager (DHRM) and/or designee all relationships prohibited by this policy. This extends to relationships with non-County staff members, such as contractors, temporary agency employees, Commissioners, or volunteers, where reporting or working arrangements may present a conflict of interest. Departments shall assess all relationships disclosed by employees to evaluate whether potential nepotism or conflicts of interest may occur and take action as necessary in accordance with this policy.

DEFINITIONS

Cohabitation is defined as a living arrangement where individuals regularly reside in the same household.

A **Conflict of Interest** refers to situations where professional judgment, decisions, or actions may be compromised due to a conflict between personal interests and official responsibilities.

Interrelated trust refers to positions with oversight, approval, or auditing relationships that help to ensure the integrity of the County's internal controls and personnel, fiscal, or programmatic operations.

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Nepotism is the practice of individuals with power or influence providing unfair advantage (personal, economic, or employment) to a relative or someone with whom the individual in power has a personal relationship.

Personal relationship is defined as a current relationship between persons as a result of cohabitation, romantic partnership or dating, financial partnership unrelated to official job duties, or any such other relationship as defined by the “*Relative*” section below.

A **Relative** is defined as any known relationship formed by blood, marriage, or adoption, such as an individual’s:

- spouse, ex-spouse, domestic partner, ex-domestic partner;
- child (including stepchild, adopted child, child of domestic partner, foster child);
- parent, stepparent, adoptive parent, legal guardian, foster parent;
- sibling (including stepsibling, adoptive sibling, half-sibling);
- grandparent, grandchild, step or adoptive grandparent, step or adopted grandchild;
- father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, and similar relationships from a previous marriage or domestic partnership; and
- aunt, uncle, spouse of aunt or uncle, cousin, niece, nephew.

GUIDELINES

Compliance Procedures

Employees shall not participate in or influence any workplace decisions involving a relative and/or someone with whom they have a personal relationship, as defined in this policy. Areas involving workplace decisions include, but are not limited to, examinations, hiring, performance evaluations, transfers, reinstatements, promotions, demotions, scheduling, compensation, reclassification studies, investigations, and discipline.

Employees who are relatives and/or have personal relationships shall not be assigned to positions of interrelated trust or authority that could impair the County’s system of checks and balances. This includes, but is not limited to, positions in certain work units that deal with approval and disbursement of funds or negotiable instruments, development and awarding of contracts, and maintenance and control of financial systems.

Employees shall not directly supervise nor serve as intradepartmental or interdepartmental project leads to any relative and/or someone with whom they have a personal relationship.

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As a best practice, indirect supervision of a relative and/or someone with whom they have a personal relationship should be avoided. In cases where indirect supervision occurs or may occur between relatives and/or individuals involved in personal relationships, departments must assess whether the indirect supervision would result in potential nepotism or a conflict of interest and take action as necessary, based on the needs of the department, in accordance with this policy.

Departments may develop more stringent policy requirements, as appropriate. Should a department develop more stringent policy requirements, consultation with County Counsel, CEO-Employee Relations, and DHR may be needed.

Transfers, Reassignments, and External Agencies

If it is determined that employees who are relatives and/or are involved in a personal relationship hold positions that present a conflict of interest or are otherwise prohibited by this policy, the department head or designee may transfer or reassign one of the individuals to the same or comparable item in a different unit, bureau, or division in the department, or reassign one of the individuals to a different project, in alignment with relevant authorities, such as Civil Service Rules, MOUs, and departmental practices.

If a conflict of interest, as outlined in this policy, involves a non-County staff member (e.g., contract staff), the supervisor/manager may request that the appropriate agency not send that individual to work in a particular facility/division/section or on a specific assignment.

Exceptions

Requests for exception to this policy must be submitted by the employee in writing to their department head or designee for each working relationship covered by this policy. Any approvals granted by such department head or designee must also be in writing and include an explanation of why the working relationship is not a conflict of interest, impairs the employee's ability to exercise fairness in the course of their duties, or negatively impacts departmental operations.

Departmental approvals must also include a written mitigation plan that, at a minimum:

- (1) Notes how the department will prevent actual and perceived conflicts of interest in the working relationship;
- (2) Describes the approved reporting relationships, including any modified reporting relationships needed to ensure that individuals with personal relationships as defined by this policy are removed from employment decisions or positions of oversight with one another; and

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- (3) Establishes or confirms the existence of appropriate oversight and approval processes for expenditures, reimbursement claims, overtime approval, or other financial decisions by the involved parties to reduce any appearance of favoritism or impropriety.

Required Acknowledgment and Disclosure

Upon hire and annually thereafter, all employees must acknowledge they have received and reviewed the County's Nepotism and Personal Relationships policy.

It is the responsibility of the employee to notify their DHRM or designee in writing once they become aware of a current or pending assignment or reporting relationship that presents a potential conflict of interest, or when the personal or professional relationship with another employee changes and is now covered in this policy.

Personal information obtained through an employee's disclosure under this policy is considered confidential and is only to be shared with individuals who have a legitimate need to know such information. Any approvals for exceptions to this policy shall be retained in the employee's official personnel file.

Noncompliance

Failure to adhere to the County's *Nepotism and Personal Relationships* policy may be cause for administrative action by the appointing authority, which may include discipline up to and including discharge from County service.

ATTACHMENT

- PPG 818 – Nepotism and Personal Relationships: Frequently Asked Questions

REFERENCES

- [Civil Service Rule 7.25, Examination to be impartial](#)
- [Civil Service Rule 15, Assignment, Interdepartmental Transfer, and Change of Classification](#)
- [Fiscal Manual, Chapter III, 3.1.4, Separation of Duties Controls](#)
- [Los Angeles County Code 2.210.010, Domestic partnership registry; purpose](#)
- CAO December 13, 1990 memo to all Department and District Heads titled "Nepotism Policy"

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