



**BUFFALO RIVER SERVICES, INC.**

# Employee Handbook

April 2014

# A Letter from the President and Chief Executive Officer

*Welcome to Buffalo River Services,*

I'd like to personally welcome you to the team. It's an exciting time for Buffalo River Services as we continue to grow, we strive to remain as adaptable, motivated and responsive to our new employees as we are to the individuals we serve. We pride ourselves on being a viable and important asset to our communities and the individuals we serve. We're glad to have you on board!

Our organization is confronting a time of many changes and we're meeting these changes during a time of larger state-wide and national change. The world of supporting Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities is an exciting area in which to work, and we'll continue working to ensure Buffalo River Services remains on the cutting edge.

We're continuously transforming the way we operate to consistently effectively improve our ability to Build Relationships, Reach Goals and Support Individuals. Our employees and partners have continued to meet the challenges of our field and to excel despite challenges. We are very proud of where we are today and excited about where we are headed.

Before I close, I'd just like you to know that you, as part of our team, are our most important and greatest asset. We could not accomplish what we do every day without our employees. I'm very pleased to welcome you to Buffalo River Services and look forward to working with you!

Phil Garner  
Executive Director  
Buffalo River Services

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# Welcome

## Who We Are

**Buffalo River Services, Inc.** is a private non-profit corporation licensed and contracted by the State of Tennessee to provide services to adults with disabilities. Buffalo River Services, Inc. had its beginning in 1972 as Wayne County Skills, Inc. with the purpose of providing services to individuals with developmental disabilities in Wayne County only. Since that time Buffalo River Services, Inc. has developed into a multi-county, decentralized agency. We have received recognition for excellence as we have gained success in transitioning from a "facilities based" and "organization centered" operation to a "community based" and "person centered" provider. We are recognized today as a viable and important asset to our communities and the individuals we serve.

We have been around for a long time. Buffalo River Services, Inc. changed its name in 1988 from the name of Wayne County Skills, Inc. In 1972, a handful of parents came together and formed an organization that was chartered as the Wayne County ARC. That group then began the work of finding funding to establish day services for their adult children, who before this time, had no where meaningful to be during the day hours while the parents worked. The funding they applied for came from the Department of Mental Retardation. On December 12, 1972, this grass root body of people, chartered Wayne County Skills and services started for a small number of adults with mental retardation.

In 1989, the organization began to operate under the new name of Buffalo River Services, Inc. to reflect the fact that the geographic area served had increased to include residents of Lewis and Perry counties along with Wayne County. Many people had been served over the first few years; however, this was only a beginning. For the next years Lawrence county residents found that Buffalo River Services was a quality provider of community services after the State of Tennessee Division of Mental Retardation invited the agency to be the "provider of choice" in 1998. Today, Buffalo River Services, Inc. supports and serves over 200 people in all combined programs of residential, day services, employment services, respite services, Family Support Services and personal assistant/home care.

At Buffalo River Services we use the Department of Intellectual Development Disabilities (DIDD) approved and mandated Individual Support Plan (ISP) for each person supported to coordinate and direct supports and services in a highly individualized approach. We are committed to the philosophy of assisting to empower each person supported to advance toward an enhanced quality of life as defined by that particular individual. Our staff works from a team approach and we are geared towards cooperating for the best interests of those we serve within Buffalo River Services, Inc. and with other individuals and agencies as well.

Today, Buffalo River Services, Inc. supports people with disabilities and their families in Giles, Hickman, Lawrence, Lewis, Maury, Perry, and Wayne counties. In 2001 and 2002, the visionary board of Buffalo River Services, Inc. began the process of establishing a fund raising organization, The William Thomas Helton Foundation (WTHF), for the specific function of providing additional financial assistance to the provider agency. Buffalo River Services operates primarily with money from the state to pay for its programs. However, like all other non-profit agencies in community services, the state funding is never adequate or abundant enough to fulfill the fiscal needs.

## **What We Do**

Buffalo River Services, INC. operates several adult day programs, as well as other day support and vocational services. A variety of options are necessary to meet the needs of persons served in Wayne, Lewis, Perry, Lawrence, Hickman, Giles, and Maury Counties. The normal hours of operation are 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The Agency also operates a number of residential services consistent with the needs of persons served. This service includes single room occupancy housing, group homes, sheltered apartments, and supported living. The hours of operation of the residential programs are approximately 3:30 p.m. till 8:30 a.m. the following morning and are staffed all day on Saturdays and Sundays, all holidays and anytime the Day Center is not operation.

## **Our Policy and Procedure Handbook**

This Handbook is designed to help make your employment with us successful and explain our expectations of you. After you review it, please keep it as a resource. You are responsible for complying with our policies, guidelines and work rules. Periodically, additions and/or deletions to this Handbook may occur, reflecting changes in business conditions and the needs of our Employees and Individuals Served. It is our commitment that we will communicate these changes in a timely manner.

This handbook was developed to provide general guidelines about Buffalo River Services policies and procedures for employees; however, this handbook is not intended to state contractual terms and does not constitute a contract between Buffalo River Services and its employees, applicants for employment, or parties who do business with Buffalo River Services. This document is also not a complete review of policies and procedures that regulate all human resources actions at Buffalo River Services.

Please see Human Resources or a Member of Management for a complete review of Buffalo River Services policies and procedures.

## **At Will Employment**

Since this Handbook may change from time to time, it is not an employment contract or legal document. You are an "at will" Employee, which means you have the right to resign at any time for any reason; Buffalo River Services may also terminate any Employee's employment at any time for any reason.

Any questions pertaining to this Handbook should be directed to your supervisor/manager or Human Resources.

## **Our Vision**

"Buffalo River Services, Inc. will be one of the most recognized agencies in the field of disability services for going beyond the professional standards, upholding person-centered excellence, and being the bridge between people with disabilities and their communities. We will succeed because we see the ability in all."

## **Our Mission**

**Building Relationships**

**Reaching Goals**

**Supporting individuals**

**Buffalo River Services, Inc. will, BUILD RELATIONSHIPS by establishing personal connections through community participation and individual settings.**

**Buffalo River Services, Inc. will, REACH GOALS on individual levels to achieve a higher quality of life through employment, residential settings, or any personal need.**

**Buffalo River Services, Inc. will, SUPPORT INDIVIDUALS by means of insuring the rights of choice, respect, dignity, and understanding in a safe environment.**

# Standards of Conduct

Throughout this section, you will find information on your responsibilities as an Employee and the commitment of Buffalo River Services, Inc. to ensure a respectful working environment. You're expected to conduct yourself in ways that favorably reflect on Buffalo River Services and yourself and to avoid activities that might interfere with our operations or with other Employees.

## Employee Responsibility

Every Employee is expected to uphold the values of Buffalo River Services and conduct themselves in a professional, respectful and ethical manner. Employees must have personal knowledge and understanding of the Handbook; uphold all policies and procedures; contribute to a positive workplace environment; seek help as needed; remain alert and sensitive to situations that could result in actions that are illegal, unethical or in violation of the Handbook or the policies and procedures that support it and discuss concerns with a supervisor or a Human Resources leader.

Employees are responsible for accurately reporting concerns. If a report is found to be a deliberate attempt to cause harm or harass another Employee or the Employee reporting is found to be a participant in the reported issue the Employee will be subject to corrective action.

## Equal Employment Opportunity

Buffalo River Services provides equal employment opportunities (EEO) and prohibits discrimination toward all its Employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, national origin, indigenous status, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, veteran status or any other class protected by federal, state and local laws.

## Americans with Disabilities Act

Buffalo River Services prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities, and requires all Employees and corporate processes to comply with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Qualified individuals with disabilities are those who meet the skill, experience, education or other employment requirements for the position being sought or held and can perform the essential functions of the job they hold or desire, with or without reasonable accommodations.

## Harassment-Free Workplace

It is your right to work in an environment free from harassment, hostility and intimidation. Buffalo River Services does not tolerate discrimination, sexual harassment or other types of harassment directed at an applicant, Employee, person supported or vendor. To further support this policy, Buffalo River Services may periodically require Employees to complete harassment prevention training.

Buffalo River Services does not permit or condone harassment or sexual harassment of any person because of race, color, national origin, indigenous status, religion, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information, veteran status, or other characteristics protected by law.

Buffalo River Services does not permit or condone sexual harassment of any Employee, by any Employee, or by any third party interacting with Buffalo River Service Employees.

## Responsibility for Reporting Concerns

All Buffalo River Service Employees have an obligation to report what they perceive to be violations of organization policy. Employees who experience, witness or receive a credible report of treatment or behavior that is inconsistent with our employment practices, policies or procedures are required to report such incidents immediately to their supervisor or Human Resources leader. Management will promptly, fairly and objectively investigate the matter.

In the case of a person supported having allegations of abuse neglect or mistreatment about them or to them, we will report to DIDD as mandated by the Provider Manual and our contract.

## No Retaliation

Buffalo River Services prohibits retaliation against anyone for the good faith reporting of a perceived violation or cooperation with an internal or external investigation. Such retaliation by any Employee or third party is a violation of our Policy and Procedures.

# Employment Policies and Procedures

This section is to familiarize Employees with agency policies, procedures and general guidelines of employment at Buffalo River Services. These policies and procedures are designed to help Employees understand their roles and responsibilities.

## Family Employment

Buffalo River Services has the right to limit the employment of any person related to another Employee if the related Employee's job creates actual or perceived issues of favoritism, conflict of interest, internal control weakness, or workplace distraction. For purposes of this policy, related persons are family members including husband, wife, son, daughter, mother, father, sister, brother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, aunt, uncle, cousin, or same-sex partner and equivalent related parties. This applies to regular full-time, part-time, contract, and temporary Employees. All prospective Employees are required to disclose the employment of any family member by Buffalo River Services at the time of their employment application, or when such relationship occurs as a result of marriage. Persons who occupy the same household but do not meet one of these relationship definitions may also be subject to this policy under certain circumstances, and should consult Human Resources for guidance.

## Computer Systems

All Buffalo River Service Employees are required to operate computer systems for their intended business purposes only. All Employees have an obligation to safeguard the hardware, software and data processed by Buffalo River Service computers against damage, alterations, theft, fraudulent manipulation, unauthorized access, and unauthorized disclosure of proprietary or confidential information. Buffalo River Services has an absolute right to monitor, limit and control the configuration and use of its computer systems and networks.

## Electronic Communications

The Buffalo River Services' electronic and telecommunication systems (telephone, voicemail, email, fax, internet access, agency network, and computer hardware and software) are agency assets and are to be protected from unauthorized access and use. It is the Buffalo River Services' policy that the electronic and telecommunication systems owned or leased by the agency are to be used in a professional and lawful manner and used primarily for business purposes only. Any personal use of these systems requires approval from your Supervisor and must always meet Buffalo River Services standards for appropriateness.

All electronic and telecommunication systems used at Buffalo River Services must comply with all federal and state laws and agency policies, practices and procedures. Employees are prohibited from using the systems in any way that violates the agency's equal employment opportunity which includes harassment and discrimination.

Employees are prohibited from sending and receiving any sexually explicit materials (i.e. pornography, jokes, and cartoons), inappropriate and offensive language, or email messages that contain gender, racial or ethnic slurs or sexual innuendos.

All information sent or received using the electronic and telecommunication systems is the property of Buffalo River Services, and may be monitored by Buffalo River Services. The tone and content of all messaging is expected to be businesslike and to reflect well on the Agency. Under no circumstances may Buffalo River Services computers or other electronic equipment be used to obtain, view, or reach any pornographic, or otherwise immoral, unethical, or non-business-related Internet sites. Doing so can lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

All employees are responsible to read all TIMAS emails in a timely manner and are responsible for all information contained in the emails. Failure to do this can result in disciplinary action up to and including termination



## Workplace Solicitation

Buffalo River Services may periodically allow selected non-profit organizations to solicit voluntary contributions from, or distribute information materials to, Buffalo River Service Employees in the workplace. Any actual or implied pressure to make such a contribution or accept such information materials constitutes harassment under our Policy. Workplace solicitation or distribution not approved by Buffalo River Services is prohibited because it may pose conflicts of interest; create discomfort among solicited Employees, and cause distraction from normal business operations.

## Drug-free & Tobacco-free Workplace

Buffalo River Services promotes the health, safety and productivity of its Employees by regulating the consumption of certain substances in its workplaces (buildings, grounds and parking structures), and by choosing not to hire or retain persons who do not pass pre-employment or post-employment controlled substance screening.

- Buffalo River Services prohibits Employees from working under the influence of, possessing, consuming or selling any alcoholic beverage while on Buffalo River Service premises
- Buffalo River Services requires Employee cooperation to maintain a drug-free workplace and prohibits the possession, sale, distribution, manufacture, use, transportation or purchase of any illegal drugs or unauthorized controlled substances (i.e., substances not used pursuant to a valid prescription) by its Employees. Use of prescription or over-the-counter substances or alcohol in a manner that appears to affect Employee judgment or safety is also prohibited.
- Buffalo River Services is a tobacco-free workplace, including vapor devices and pipes, except in designated outdoor smoking areas.

If an Employee tests positive they may have the option to enter a 60 month drug free program (this does not include Employees that are in their 6 month probationary period). However, any further positive drug tests at any time during employment will result in immediate termination. *(Please refer to the Drug-free and Tobacco free policy in the Buffalo River Services Manual)*

## Social Media

Social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and others may represent an effective way to interact with present and potential Buffalo River Service individuals, Employees and other stakeholders. Employees are required to observe the social media policy and its standards. *(Please refer to the Social Media Policy in the Buffalo River Services Manual)*.

### Know your role:

As with traditional media, only “authorized spokesperson” designated by Buffalo River Services is permitted to speak on behalf of the Organization in social media forums. All activities with regard to social media which include communication that create the impression that the originator is communicating on the behalf of Buffalo River Services.

### Think before you post:

Social media sites provide an easy and immediate outlet for posting photos, videos, or other content, but not all Buffalo River Service-related content is appropriate to be shared externally. Before posting, particularly when it involves an office setting (including holiday parties or other events held at a Buffalo River Services’ facility) off-site events hosted by Buffalo River Services, or unofficial Employee gatherings where the Buffalo River Services’ name or logo is identifiable, please contact Human Resources. It is up to all of us to protect Buffalo River Services’ reputation to maintain the security of our facilities.

### When in doubt, check with Human Resources:

Employees who post content on any social media or online site that discusses Buffalo River Services or its activities, or expresses opinions on issues or trends related to the business, without approval, violates our social media policy.

### Help maintain our privacy and confidential information:

Sharing confidential information via any online source – such as tweeting about unannounced information or

sharing non-public information regarding people we support violates our social media policy.

Taking photos and pictures of people we support is prohibited without a release of photo statement signed and documented by the proper personnel and that documentation stored in the persons file. No posting of pictures of clients on any social media without knowledge of the management and expressed informed consent of the person using proper procedures.

## **Weapons**

Buffalo River Services does not permit weaponry of any kind on its premises including parking lots. Weaponry is defined to include, but is not limited to all guns, swords and knives (exception: cutlery being utilized for purposes of food preparation and serving), explosives, caustic or other dangerous chemicals (exception: materials being utilized for purposes of facilities repair and maintenance).

## **Workplace Violence**

Buffalo River Services is committed to preventing workplace violence and to maintaining a safe work environment. All Employees should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from fighting, "horseplay," or other conduct that may be dangerous to others.

## **Work Hours**

Buffalo River Services recognizes a core work schedule of 36 hours for Direct Care Nursing Employees and 40 hours for Regular Employees per week. Your work schedule (including starting times, days of the week, breaks and lunch periods) will be set by your supervisor. All work schedules require supervisor approval.

## **Meal Periods**

Employee meal periods are important to agency productivity and Employee health. Buffalo River Services expects employees that are given a lunch break to eat their lunch during that break and not when they return to work on the agency clock. Non-exempt Employees who work at least six (6) consecutive hours will be provided a meal break not to exceed 30 minutes. The meal period will not be included in the total hours of work per day and is not compensable. Non-exempt Employees are strictly forbidden from performing any work while on meal breaks and must clock out for meal periods. Managers are strictly forbidden from requesting a non-exempt Employee to work during mandatory meal periods. Direct Care Employees will be provided a meal break and it will be included in the total hours of work per day and will be compensable. During times in which a Direct Care employee is training or performing other duties, outside of direct patient care, the lunch break will be non-compensatory.

## **Rest Breaks**

Buffalo River Services recognizes that Employees work better and enjoy their work more when they are rested and refreshed. Exempt (salaried) Employees, those that are paid a weekly salary regardless of the hours they work, may choose to take breaks as needed. Non-exempt (hourly) Employees are permitted one 10-minute rest break for each four (4) hours of work. Non-exempt Employees on rest breaks are not required to clock in and clock out since this time is considered "time worked" and is compensable. However, Employees are encouraged to leave their workstations during rest breaks in order to achieve the rest and refreshment the break is designed to give. If necessary, supervisors will advise Employees of particular arrangements necessary for rest breaks in their respective departments.

## **Attendance and Punctuality**

Buffalo River Services provides important services to the people we support. In order to accomplish this mission, it is imperative that every Employee be present and on time when scheduled to ensure we fulfill our commitments.

Although attendance typically is specific to non-exempt (hourly) Employees, exempt (salaried) Employees are still expected to work their regular schedule of hours in the work week and if absent to notify their direct supervisor.

Employees may be disciplined for tardiness and excessive absenteeism even though proper notices have been submitted. If an Employee is absent from work without contacting a supervisor or calling the "on call" number, you will be treated as having voluntarily resigned your position (job abandonment). (Please refer to the Attendance Policy in the Buffalo River Services Manual)

### **Inclement Weather**

In the interest of Employee safety, a determination will be made to close the office depending on the seriousness of weather conditions. Employees will be contacted by their supervisor or a member of management to inform them if the office will be closed for the day.

If the office is officially closed, Employees are not expected to report to work. If the office is open, all full-time Employees are expected to make every effort to come to work. Part-time Employees should call to see if they are needed to cover residential locations. If an Employee is unable to report to work, Employees will be expected to take PTO if available.

### **Telecommuting & Remote Work Guideline**

Buffalo River Services recognizes that in today's working and living environment Employees and/or Buffalo River Services may have the need for flexible work arrangements. Buffalo River Services believes that alternative work arrangements are, at times, in the best interest of the Employee and the business, and in fact, there are certain positions within the organization that require an Employee to telecommute or to work remotely.

While the Buffalo River Services is committed to making reasonable efforts to accommodate an Employee's personal request for an alternative work arrangement, it is essential that any approved arrangement meet the needs and interests of the Employer, deliver quality service, and provide support to the organization and other Employees. To ensure the success of alternative work arrangements, requests should be made to Human Resources and your supervisor. Fair consideration will be given to requests.

### **Workplace Attire/Dress Code**

As an Employee of Buffalo River Services, you are expected to maintain an overall professional appearance that is appropriate for your position. Your appearance should be neat and clean at all times. Buffalo River Services observes a "business casual" work environment. (Please refer to the Dress code Policy for further details).

### **Mobile Device Usage**

Depending upon your position at Buffalo River Services, you may be issued an agency cell phone or Blackberry. These devices should be used primarily for work purposes and any content that is viewed and/or searched must not violate Buffalo River Services' policy.

Personal mobile devices should primarily be used during rest breaks, lunches and/or emergency situations. Mobile device use while driving on Buffalo River Services business is prohibited. Buffalo River Services is not liable for any traffic violation that may be incurred from unsafe driving practices.

### **Fleet Usage**

In providing and maintaining a fleet of vehicles, Buffalo River Services must assure that all vehicles are used in a responsible manner to fulfill its service mission.

In order to operate any Buffalo River Service vehicle, the driver must possess a current Class D Operator's License with an "F" endorsement issued by the Tennessee Department of Public Safety. Buffalo River Service vehicles may be operated only by Agency Employees or by individuals specifically approved by the Executive Director. *(For detailed information please refer to the fleet policy in the Buffalo River Services Manual).*

### **Corrective Action Process – Discipline**

Buffalo River Services has established a standard disciplinary process to ensure fair and efficient administration of disciplinary actions. Buffalo River Services reserves the right to take disciplinary action at any time up to and including termination of employment in accordance with the agency's employment-at-will statement.

The employment-at-will statement provides that an Employee is free to terminate his/her relationship with the Buffalo River Services and Buffalo River Services is likewise free to terminate its relationship with the Employee at any time with or without cause and without notice.

### **Verbal Warning/feedback**

A verbal warning makes an Employee aware that demonstrated behavior is inappropriate and not acceptable workplace behavior. A verbal warning gives the manager an opportunity to make the Employee aware of the unacceptable behavior and the consequences for continuing the behavior. The verbal warning also gives the Employee an understanding of what is needed to correct behavior and avoid further violations.

### **Written Warning**

A written warning is formal notice to an Employee that his/her behavior violates Buffalo River Services policy or procedure. A written warning should be issued depending on the severity of the violation, if the violation is a repeated occurrence or one in a series of different violations.

### **Final Written Warning**

Final written warnings occur when an Employee is put on notice that any additional Buffalo River Services policy or procedure violated will result in the termination of employment. A final written warning is appropriate when an Employee demonstrates a pattern of unacceptable behavior, repeatedly violates Buffalo River Services' policies, has received multiple Disciplinary Notices and/or commits a serious violation that does not warrant termination for a first offense. Depending on the severity of the violation, prior warnings may or may not have occurred.

### **Termination**

Termination typically occurs as a result of a serious offense or after multiple violations of a Buffalo River Services' policy or procedure as the final step in the discipline process. This action is the most serious of all disciplinary procedures and is normally used only as a last resort. This action is taken when previous steps have not been successful in solving a problem. Buffalo River Services recognizes that there are certain types of employee situations that are serious enough and will justify termination of employment without going through the progressive discipline process.

All termination requires approval by Executive Director with adequate documentation and recommendation from the Program Director and/or Human Resources.

### **Grievance Procedures and Guidelines**

Employees are encouraged to bring to the attention of leadership their grievances about work related issues. Employees will be provided an opportunity to present their complaints and appeal leadership decisions through a formal grievance procedure. All grievances will be resolved promptly. *(For detailed information on the grievance policy please refer to the Buffalo River Human Resources Policy Manual)*

# Managing Your Career at Buffalo River Services

## Performance Review

Performance review is a process for assessing the performance and contributions of each Employee on an ongoing and continuous basis. It also involves providing feedback to the Employee on that performance on an ongoing and continuous basis.

The Supervisor will provide feedback to Employees on their work performance. That process will be formalized in a written performance review conducted for each new Employee at the end of an initial 6-month review period and thereafter at least annually.

Each performance review is thoroughly discussed by all parties. The Employee signs the report to acknowledge discussions of its contents and to signify concurrence with the recommendations.

## Compensation

To attract, retain and motivate Employees, Buffalo River Services attempts to pay wages and salaries that are competitive with rates being paid for similar jobs by other employers in the community. Salaries are paid in a manner that recognizes the scope, accountability and impact of jobs.

## Bonuses and Longevity

A percentage of Bonuses & Longevity will be paid to all full-time, part-time, and PRN Employee when the Agency is financially able. This will be based on the total hours worked per year, up to 40 hours each week, and the Employee must be in the active status. *(Please refer to the Salary Administration policy in the Buffalo River Services Manual).*

## Regular Pay and Direct Deposit

Buffalo River Services pays Employees on a regular basis for all work hours completed and leave time utilized. Employees are normally paid every other Friday. Buffalo River Services requires all Employees to have their pay check direct deposited into a savings or checking account.

## Job Posting & Selection

Creating a culture that facilitates the development and advancement of its Employees by promoting from within not only benefits the Employee, but also our organization. It is the desire of Buffalo River Services to provide growth opportunities for our Employees through our internal hiring process.

To ensure that all Employees are made aware of and have the opportunity to apply for open positions; all open positions will be posted on the TIMAS Intranet for a minimum of 7 business days. Managers may also simultaneously post the position externally. While it is the Buffalo River Services' goal to create an environment supportive of career growth and development, there are business reasons that could cause a position to be filled without posting.

An Employee who is in good standing and have "meets expectations or above" performance rating can apply for positions using the Careers area on the Intranet site. Additionally, Employees must possess the qualifications for the position, meet the position requirements, be in their current positions for a minimum of six months (management discretion), and demonstrate effective performance and behavior. Fair consideration will be given to qualified, internal candidates.

New Employees who are currently in PRN/LPN or part-time positions and are wishing to work a full-time position may

apply for open positions even if they have not completed their six months.

## **Background Review Policy**

Buffalo River Services has a responsibility for ensuring the safety and security of the organization's Employees, assets, systems and persons supported information. For these reasons, Buffalo River Services conducts pre-employment background reviews for all newly hired, re-hired and, in some situations, current Employees.

## **Pre-Employment Reviews**

All offers of employment are contingent upon the successful completion of Buffalo River Service pre-employment screening and verification process. Reviews conducted include:

- Education – Buffalo River Services verifies the highest level of education obtained if applicable;
- Employment – A complete work history with a continuous description of activities for the past five (5) years; At least three (3) personal references, including at least one who has know the individual for at least five (5) years.
- Criminal History Report – A criminal convictions search, for the seven-year period prior to the date of application, will be conducted. All convictions will be reviewed for relatedness to the position the candidate is applying for.
- MVR - Must be over the age of 18. Will not hire anyone to drive a Buffalo River Services vehicle that has three (3) or more violations in the past year involving a conviction of speeding over 15 miles above the posted speed limit or any driving offense which constitutes a Class A misdemeanor.
- Drug Test – Candidates, including former Employees eligible for rehire, are required during the interview process to take and to test negative on a 10 panel drug test;

## **Reasonable Suspicion**

Unless applicable state/country law stipulates otherwise, Buffalo River Services may conduct a substance abuse review, based on reasonable suspicion. Reasonable suspicion is defined as action, conduct, behavior, or information which causes Buffalo River Services to be concerned as to the Employee's trustworthiness and/or ability to perform the job duties in an honest, safe, or secure manner. For further information please speak with Human Resources.

## **Post- Accident**

A drug and/or alcohol test will be conducted when an Employee is involved in an on-the-job accident that may have involved human error that causes a fatality or a serious injury resulting in a loss of work time or significant property damage.

## **Random**

Random drug testing will be conducted monthly and administered by a third party.  
(Please refer to the Substance Abuse Policy in the Buffalo River Services Manual)

## **Personnel Records**

In order to keep your records up-to-date, you should immediately update your personnel record with any changes to your name, contact information, home address, marital status, dependents or your emergency contact information. It is an employment requirement that Buffalo River Services has a valid phone number where you can be reached.

The information about you in these files is treated confidentially within Buffalo River Services and is released only to comply with legal requirements. Supervisors and other Employees are prohibited from providing personal or employment references on current or former Employees. If the Buffalo River Services receives a subpoena or court order

requesting information on an Employee, it will be honored.

While you are employed at Buffalo River Services, you can view and request copies of your personnel file. If there is any incorrect information in your file, you can have it corrected. If you disagree with any comments within your file, you can add a written explanation.

### **Reference Checks & Employment Verification**

Buffalo River Services will not release any information to prospective employers about individual Employees without a written release, unless failure to release information creates a legal liability for Buffalo River Services.

### **Resignation**

If you decide to leave the agency, we ask that you notify your supervisor/manager in writing at least two weeks before the effective date. You will be paid through your last day of employment and will be paid for 2/3 accrued PTO days if the following is satisfied:

1. The employee must have been employed for at least six months.
2. The employee must have submitted a written notice and WORK a minimal two week notice
3. The employee workload is current (this is determined by the department head).

An employee terminated for misconduct or not in good standing will forfeit all accrued PTO.

## **Benefits at Buffalo River Services**

### **Paid Time-Off (PTO) Program**

Buffalo River Services understands the importance of vacation time for its Employees' well-being. Paid Time-Off (PTO) provides eligible Employees with a flexible approach to time off, giving the Employee responsibility for managing his/her own PTO hours for vacation, illness, funerals, personal appointments, emergencies and/or other personal needs that require time away from work.

PTO days will accrue for a full-time and a part-time Employee as defined in the PTO policy. To have an excused absence, an Employee must give a twelve (12) hour notice and receive prior approval on an approved leave slip from supervisor. This applies to all Employees scheduled to work.

Cash conversion privileges are available each year for Employees with at least one year of service. All PTO hours exceeding a total of 80 hours may be sold back at the Employee's current rate of pay and not to exceed 80 hours.

Employees may also donate their PTO time to other Employees who may not have leave time available.

For Accrual rates please refer to the Payroll Office.

### **Holidays**

Buffalo River Services provides paid holidays to Employees, but can only be taken if coverage is available for all locations. If you schedule a PTO day before or after a Holiday, please ensure prior approval from your supervisor so adequate coverage can be assigned.

For a current listing of paid holidays, please see the Payroll Office.

### **Jury Duty**

If called to jury duty or subpoenaed as a court witness on behalf of Buffalo River Services, you'll have time off from your working hours as long as you're needed in court.

If you're a full-time or part-time Employee, you'll receive your regular pay for up to 30 days per year, in addition to any money paid by the court. Part-time Employees will be paid for the hours they are normally scheduled to work.

You are expected at work on the days you're not needed at court and when you leave court early enough to work part of the day. You are also expected to keep your supervisor informed of your jury duty schedule. You will be required to provide proof of jury service.

## **Time Off to Vote**

Buffalo River Services encourages Employees to participate in local, state and federal elections. If you do not have sufficient time outside your normal work schedule to vote, contact your Human Resources department for information regarding your state and local voting leave rules.

## **Leaves of Absence**

### ***Unpaid Leave of Absence***

Regular full-time and regular part-time Employees who have completed one year of continuous service may request an unpaid leave of absence. Leave without pay is to be used only for serious illness or a serious life situation and can only be approved by the Executive Director or his designee. Abuse of leave without pay will be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination. *(For further information please refer to the BSR Manual)*

### ***Family Medical Leave***

The Family Medical Leave Act entitles eligible Employees to take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the Employee had not taken leave. Eligible Employees are entitled to:

(1) Twelve work weeks of leave in a 12-month period for:

- The birth of a child and to care for the newborn child within one year of birth;
- The placement with the Employee of a child for adoption or foster care and to care for the newly placed child within one year of placement;
- To care for the Employee's spouse, child, or parent who has a serious health condition;
- A serious health condition that makes the Employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her job;
- Any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the Employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on "covered active duty;"

Or

(2) Twenty-six work weeks of leave during a single 12-month period to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent or next of kin to the Employee (military caregiver leave).

You are eligible for Family Medical Leave if you have been employed with Buffalo River Services for at least 12 months and have completed at least 1,250 hours of service during the 12-month period preceding the leave.

You are required to use your accrued paid leave during your approved leave of absence. Accrued leave consists of your PTO time. The remainder of the leave period will then consist of unpaid leave. If accrued leave time is exhausted you are responsible for your health premiums (please see payroll for more information). Leave for the birth or placement of a child for adoption or foster care must be taken and concluded within 12 months from the date of the birth or placement.

## **Requesting FMLA Leave**

You must notify your supervisor/manager and Human Resources as soon as you learn that you will need to request family medical leave. Your request should be given 30 days in advance or as soon as the necessity for leave arises.



For a detailed explanation of your benefits while on approved Family Medical Leave, contact your Human Resources Department.

## **Military Leave**

Buffalo River Services is committed to protecting the job rights of Employees absent on military leave. In accordance with federal and state law, it is the organization's policy that no Employee will be subjected to any form of discrimination on the basis of the Employee's obligation to perform service for any of the Uniformed Services of the United States.

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) protects service members' reemployment rights when returning from a period of service in the uniformed services, including those called up from the reserves or National Guard, and prohibits employer discrimination based on military service or obligation.

You are eligible for re-employment under USERRA if you have:

1. Provided Buffalo River Services with advance written or verbal notice of your service;
2. Five years or less of cumulative service in the uniformed services while employed at Buffalo River Services;
3. Returned to work or applied for re-employment in a timely manner after conclusion of service; and
4. Not been separated from service with a disqualifying discharge or under other than honorable conditions.

If you are eligible to be re-employed, Buffalo River Services will restore you to the job and benefits you would have attained if you had not been absent due to military service or, in some cases, a comparable job.

## **Benefit Coverage for Military**

When you take an approved Military Leave, you are eligible to continue your existing health plan coverage for you and your dependents for up to 24 months while on active duty. You will be responsible to pay the benefit premiums during your leave.

If you choose not to elect coverage during your military service, you are able to reinstate your health plan when you are re-employed, generally without any waiting periods or exclusions (e.g., pre-existing condition exclusions) except for service-connected illnesses or injuries.

For a detailed explanation of your benefits while on Military Leave, contact Human Resources.

## **Administrative Leave**

Employees may be placed on Administrative Leave when an investigation is being conducted regarding abuse, neglect, mistreatment and exploitation of persons supported. Employees may have three options if taken off work if they have regularly scheduled hours.

1. They may be allowed to work in the office during office hours
2. They may request PTO
3. If no PTO is available, they may request leave without pay

At the Buffalo River Services' discretion, the organization may request an exemption from the Tennessee Department of Intellectual Disabilities for the employee to continue working.

For more information regarding administrative leave guidelines, please contact Human Resources.

## Benefits Available at Buffalo River Services

Buffalo River Services offers a comprehensive and competitive benefits program that promotes healthy lifestyles for you and your family. We are committed to providing tools to help you take full advantage of your benefits and maintain wellness, while managing healthcare costs. As we partner with you to meet your healthcare needs, we will strive to provide a fair, affordable benefits package with a simple, straight-forward design. This represents the principles of our benefits philosophy.

### Medical and Dental Insurance

Insurance: A complete medical plan is made available for Employees and is effective the 1st of the month following 60 days after employment. An Employee must be full-time to be eligible. Insurance cost information is available in the Payroll Office. Dental and vision insurance are also available. Insurance costs are available in the payroll office.

### Short-Term Disability

The Short-Term Disability (STD) Plan is a Buffalo River Services-paid benefit made available to all full time employees that is designed to protect your income in the event of a qualified disability. If you are unable to work because of a non-job related illness or because of an injury caused by an accident off the job and you are under the regular care of a qualified physician, you may be eligible to receive short-term disability benefits.

### Long-Term Disability

The Long- Term Disability (LTD) Plan is a Buffalo River Services-paid benefit made available for all full time employees that covers an injury or illness that keeps you away from work for more than 180 days.

For a detailed explanation of STD or LTD plans please contact the Payroll Office.

### Basic Life Insurance

Life insurance is an important part of your financial security, especially if others depend on you for support. Your beneficiary may use your life insurance to pay off your debts such as credit cards, mortgages and other final expenses. An Employee must be full-time to be eligible.

Please refer to the Payroll Office

**Acknowledgment and Receipt**

**I have received my copy of the Employee Handbook.**

The employee handbook describes important information about Buffalo River Services, and I understand that I should consult Human Resources regarding any questions not answered in the handbook. I have entered into my employment relationship with Buffalo River Services voluntarily and acknowledge that there is no specified length of employment.

**Accordingly, either I or Buffalo River Services can terminate the relationship at will, with or without cause, at any time, so long as there is not violation of applicable federal or state law.**

I understand that, except for employment at-will status, any and all policies and practices may be changed at any time by Buffalo River Services and the organization reserves the right to change my hours, wages and working conditions at any time. All such changes will be communicated through official notices, and I understand that revised information may supersede, modify, or eliminate existing policies.

**I understand and agree that nothing in the Employee Handbook creates, or is intended to create; a promise or representation of continued employment and that employment at Buffalo River Services is employment at-will, which may be terminated at the will of either Buffalo River Services or me. Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook is neither a contract of employment nor a legal document.** I understand and agree that employment and compensation may be terminated with or without cause and with or without notice at any time by Buffalo River Services or me.

I have received the handbook, and I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Name (Print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**TO BE PLACED IN EMPLOYEE'S PERSONNEL FILE**