



To: Human Resources Committee  
From: Jaclyn Johnson, Director of HR and Payroll  
Re: 2025 BCG Employee Handbook Updates  
Date: July 15, 2025

In an effort to maintain the best interests of Blount County Government and its citizens, provide clear and concise employee guidelines, and remain competitive in the current job market, the Human Resources Department proposes the following changes to the BCG Employee Handbook. These policies apply to all Blount County Government employees, except for employees of the Blount County Public Library and the Blount County Sheriff's Office. Additionally, these policies do not apply to Blount County School employees or Blount County Highway employees, as these separate entities are governed by their own independent handbooks.

The Officeholders using the General County handbook have been informed and support the following amendments. The proposed changes are highlighted in Exhibit A for easy reference.

#### **Policy Additions:**

**Rehired Employees** – A new policy has been added to clarify the procedures and waiting periods for rehired employees. While much of this information is already included in various sections throughout the handbook, this policy concisely summarizes everything into one section.

**Minimum Age** – A policy has been added to clarify the minimum age for employment. While it is generally understood that the minimum age to work for the County is 18 years, explicitly stating this requirement in the handbook will help avoid confusion and misunderstandings regarding eligibility for employment. This also provides hiring managers with clear guidelines on hiring practices related to age.

**E-Verify** – The County utilizes E-Verify to electronically verify the employment eligibility of newly hired employees. Although it is not required to include notice of E-Verify participation in the employee handbook, doing so is considered best practice. It offers employees a readily accessible resource to understand the process and demonstrates the County's commitment to transparency.

**Annual Leave** – A new policy has been added to streamline the administration of the County's leave plan and to enhance the County's competitiveness within the current job market. This policy will replace the existing Vacation and Personal Leave policies, creating a single, competitive plan that better aligns with similar agencies in the area. The new policy will take effect on October 5, 2025. This delayed start will allow time for proper communication and implementation.

#### **Policy Changes:**

**Vacation** – The Vacation policy will be terminated effective October 4, 2025 and will be replaced by the Annual Leave Plan.

**Personal Leave** – The Personal Leave policy will be terminated effective October 4, 2025 and will also be replaced by the Annual Leave Plan.

**Tennessee Consolidated Retirement Systems (TCRS)** – The policy has been updated to include corrections officers in the TCRS bridge program. This change was approved by the legislative body on April 17, 2025 (Resolution No. 25-04-006).

**Tuition Reimbursement** – The policy has been updated to extend the length of service requirement for employees receiving tuition reimbursements. This extended requirement ensures that the County receives a return on its investment in employee education by keeping employees for a reasonable period. The length of service requirement is extended from one year to two years.

**Professional Development Courses** – This updated policy establishes a length of service requirement for employees taking professional development courses funded by the County. Approval for these courses will depend on budgetary factors. Like the tuition reimbursement policy, the length of service requirement ensures the County benefits from its investment in employee education by retaining employees for a reasonable duration.