

**SANTA YNEZ COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT**

**MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Board of Directors  
**From:** Loch Dreizler, General Manager  
**Date:** June 26, 2024  
**Subject:** Review, discuss, and approve the Final Draft Employee Handbook suggest changes from the May 15, 2024 Meeting

**Handbook available at:**

<https://www.sycsd.com/files/fbaa59b78/01.+Employee+Handbook+Binder.pdf>

**Proposed Motion/Recommendation:**

- **General Motion:** Approve the Final Draft Employee Handbook and confirm that the policies and procedures outlined in this Handbook supersede any prior policies and procedures.
- Jury/Witness Duty Motion (if enhanced during discussion):
- Bereavement Leave Motion (if enhanced during discussion):
- Cost of Living Salary Adjustment (COLA) Motion: Use the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA, CPI-U 12-month percent change between January and December for the July 1 fiscal year budget.
- Artificial Intelligence Motion (if the attached policy is enhanced during discussion):

**Alternatives Considered:** None

**Fiscal Implications:** None

**Discussion:** The Draft Employee Handbook resulted from extensive collaboration between the personnel committee, staff, and legal counsel, reflecting the District's collective dedication to the Santa Ynez Community Services District.

At the previous Board Meeting, the following items were to be brought back to the Board with Staff Recommendations:

**Items for further discussion**

1. Jury/Witness Duty – see attachment #1
2. Bereavement Leave see attachment #2
3. Cost-of-Living Salary Adjustments (COLA) see attachment #3
4. Artificial Intelligence see attachment #4

Items to be revised by Staff before final publication

5. District Property (about vehicles) was also discussed to include specifically in the Employee Handbook.
6. Confirm that page numbering aligns with the Table of Contents before publishing it on the website and making it available to employees.
7. Further, define "crime victim time off and accommodation" in the first paragraph to align with the second paragraph.
8. Artificial Intelligence

## Jury/Witness Duty – Attachment #1

Question: Should the District consider enhancing the State Law?

### The Employee Handbook Language:

You should immediately notify your supervisor or the General Manager if you receive a notice for jury duty. If you are summoned for jury duty, you will be paid the difference between jury duty pay and your base hourly rate for up to a maximum of ten (10) working days per year. If required by law to appear in court as a witness, you may be given time off with pay of up to a maximum of 32 hours for such a purpose if you provide the District with reasonable advance notice and proof of such court order. Additional time spent on a jury or witness duty will be unpaid. However, following applicable wage and hour laws, the salary of exempt employees will not be reduced for any week in which an exempt employee continues to work some portion of a week while on jury duty leave.

In California, employers have specific responsibilities when it comes to jury duty:

1. **Unpaid time Off:** Employers must provide employees with unpaid time off for reporting to jury selection or jury duty.
2. **No Harassment or Dismissal:** Employers are legally obligated to let the employee serve without fear of harassment or dismissal resulting from jury service<sup>2</sup>. The California Labor Code prohibits an employer from firing or harassing an employee summoned to court to serve as a juror.
3. **Compensation:** State law does not require employers to compensate employees who are absent because of jury service. However, many employers have jury-leave policies that pay employees for the time needed at court for jury service.
4. **Postponement:** Employees can seek a postponement of jury service. In most cases, the courts will allow one postponement of service to a date chosen by the employee.

## Bereavement Leave – Attachment #2

Question: Should the District consider enhancing the State Law?

### The Employee Handbook Language:

Upon the death of a covered family member, employees employed for at least 30 days with the District are eligible to take up to five (5) days of bereavement leave. The leave must be completed within three (3) months of the date of death and does not have to be taken on consecutive days.

Bereavement leave is unpaid, except that an employee may use any accrued, unused vacation or sick leave during the unpaid portion of the leave.

A "covered family member," for purposes of this policy, includes the employee's spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, domestic partner, or parent-in-law.

The District may require, within 30 days of the first day of the employee's bereavement leave, that the employee provide documentation of the death of the covered family member for whom the leave is taken. Documentation may include, but is not limited to, a death certificate, a published obituary, or written verification of death, burial, or memorial services from a mortuary, funeral home, burial society, crematorium, religious institution, or government agency. The District shall maintain the confidentiality of an employee requesting leave under this policy, including that any documentation provided by the employee shall be maintained as confidential and shall not be disclosed except to the General Manager or management, as necessary or as required by law. The bereavement leave this policy provides is separate and distinct from any rights provided according to the CFRA.

According to this policy and applicable law, the District shall not retaliate against an employee for the use of bereavement leave or for exercising their rights. Employees should notify the General Manager of their need to take bereavement leave as soon as practical.

In California, employees have certain rights and responsibilities when it comes to bereavement leave:

1. **Eligibility:** If you work for an employer with five or more employees, you may be entitled to bereavement leave following the death of certain family members. To be eligible for bereavement leave, an employee must have been employed for at least 30 days before taking the leave.
2. **Duration:** California law guarantees most employees up to five days of bereavement leave from work following the death of a family member. You must take bereavement leave within three months of the death. You can take off the days altogether or separately over the three months.

3. **Family Members:** Covered employers must allow you to take bereavement leave upon the death of your spouse, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, domestic partner, or parent-in-law<sup>1</sup>. However, an employer may voluntarily allow bereavement leave to be taken upon the death of another person with whom you have a relationship.
4. **Employer's Policy:** You must follow your employer's existing bereavement leave policy<sup>1</sup>. For example, if your employer's policy requires you to inform the General Manager that you are taking bereavement leave, you must continue to do so under the new law
5. **Compensation:** Bereavement leave is unpaid, but you can use your paid vacation and sick days for bereavement purposes. However, many employers do have bereavement leave policies that provide compensation.
6. **Job Protection:** It is unlawful for your employer to discriminate or retaliate against you because you requested or used bereavement leave.

## Cost-of-Living Salary Adjustments (COLA) – Attachment #3

### Recommended Reference

Use the Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA, CPI-U 12-month percent changes, between January and December. This year we used January to December of 2023 to determine CPI increase in July 2024. Next year we would reference January to December 2024 to Determine CPI increase for July 2025, and so on.

Table A. Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA, CPI-U 1-month and 12-month percent changes, all items index, not seasonally adjusted

Month	2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month	1-month	12-month
January	0.8	3.1	0.2	0.9	1.1	7.5	1.9	5.8	1.0	2.5
February	0.3	3.4	0.4	1.0	0.3	7.4	-0.3	5.1	0.5	3.4
March	-0.7	1.9	0.5	2.2	1.5	8.5	0.1	3.7	0.7	4.0
April	-0.3	0.7	1.1	3.6	0.5	7.9	0.7	3.8	0.6	3.9
May	0.4	0.9	0.6	3.9	0.8	8.0	0.1	3.2	0.1	3.9
June	0.5	1.4	0.6	4.0	1.1	8.6	0.5	2.5		
July	0.6	1.9	0.6	3.9	-0.2	7.7	0.0	2.7		
August	0.1	2.0	0.2	4.0	0.1	7.6	0.7	3.3		
September	-0.3	1.2	0.3	4.6	0.5	7.8	0.3	3.2		
October	0.2	0.7	0.9	5.4	0.6	7.5	-0.1	2.4		
November	0.1	1.0	0.6	6.0	-0.8	6.0	-0.4	2.8		
December	-0.2	1.5	0.4	6.6	-0.6	4.9	0.0	3.5		

The June 2024 Consumer Price Index for the Los Angeles area is scheduled to be released on July 11, 2024.

### Finance Committee Discussion about maximum and minimum annual increases.

Whether there should be maximum and minimum increases is a complex issue. On one hand, setting a maximum limit can help manage the financial sustainability of the District. On the other hand, a minimum increase can protect employees from the risk of inflation eroding their purchasing power

An example might include a minimum increase of 2% and a maximum increase of 5%

### Language from the current Handbook:

1. **Wage Increases** - Cost of Living salary adjustments (COLA) shall be applied at the same percentage rate to each position and classification in the salary and wage schedule effective each July 1 of the calendar year. The section does not allow for an individual employee's salary/wage to be reduced under the terms of the Agreement.
  - a. **On July 1, 2018, wages will increase** by 3.7% (CPI of March 2018).
  - b. **On July 1, 2019, employees' wages will increase** by the March CPI number. If the March CPI exceeds 3.5, the wage increase will be capped at 3.5%.
  - c. **On July 1, 2020, the employees' wages will increase** by the March CPI number. If the March CPI exceeds 3.5, the wage increase will be capped at 3.5%.

## Artificial Intelligence – Attachment #4

### Employee Policy for Artificial Intelligence

#### AI Acceptable Use Policy

##### **Purpose**

This policy outlines the acceptable use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and systems within our organization. It promotes responsible and ethical AI usage while safeguarding data privacy and security.

##### **Guidelines**

1. Employees must avoid inputting personal or sensitive information into AI systems.
2. Use only AI applications approved by the General Manager.
3. Be transparent about AI usage.
4. Do not use AI for test-taking.

##### **Enforcement**

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary measures, including termination.