

# **Budget Committee Meeting September 1, 2010**

## **PCA Policy Manual**

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# PCA Policy Manual ### VACATION TIME

## POLICY

Court staff members, other than temporary employees, who work 20 or more hours per week are eligible for paid vacation time in accordance with this policy.

Vacation time accrues on a monthly basis after the first full calendar month of employment.

Employees who separate from service will automatically receive a lump sum payment for unused vacation time, subject to a maximum of 960 hours.

All accruals and payouts of vacation time are prorated for employees who work less than 40 hours per week.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Accrual of Vacation Time

The vacation time accrual rates set forth in the table below are based on a 40-hour work week.

Years of Service	Accrual Rate (Hrs./Mo.)	Annualized Vacation Days
Zero to five	6.67	10
Six to Ten	10.00	15
Eleven	10.67	16
Twelve	11.33	17
Thirteen	12.00	18
Fourteen	12.67	19
Fifteen to twenty-four	13.33	20
Twenty-five or more	16.67	25

Vacation time continues to accrue during periods when vacation is taken. It does not accrue for any calendar month in which an employee is off the payroll for an aggregate of more than three of the employee's normal work days. Vacation time accrues for the first 12 months during which an employee is receiving workers' compensation benefits.

Individuals who transfer from one court to another shall maintain accrued vacation time balances.

Vacation time may accrue up to a maximum of the hourly equivalent of 120 days. After employees have reached the maximum accrual, vacation time begins to re-accrue in the month when vacation time is taken.

### Use of Vacation Time

Judges should permit employees to take vacations at such times as they choose as long as the operational needs of the court can be fulfilled.

### Payment of Unused Accrued Vacation Time

Employees may accumulate vacation time in an amount not to exceed 960 hours, prorated for employees working less than 40 hours per week. Upon separation from employment by retirement, discharge, resignation, or death, employees will be paid for unused accrued vacation time, subject to the 960-hour maximum. Payment for unused accrued vacation time will be based upon the employee's rate of pay at the time of separation.

### Transition to Accrual System (Incumbent Employees Only)

On January 5, 2011, court staff who were employed by a probate court before January 5, 2011 will receive a one-time advance accrual in the amount of 40 hours of vacation time, prorated for employees scheduled to work less than 40 hours per week during the 2011 calendar year. The monthly accrual rate will be prorated to compensate for the advance accrual. Beginning January 1, 2012, employees will accrue vacation time at the normal rates.

Employees hired on or after January 5, 2011 will accrue vacation time at the normal rates.

### Proration of Accrual and Payout Amounts

All provisions of this policy establishing vacation time accrual rates and the payout of vacation time on separation from employment are based upon a 40-hour work week. Such amounts are prorated for employees whose standard work week is less than 40 hours.

For example, vacation time for an employee who works 35 hours per week and has 10 years of service is as follows:

Monthly accrual rate: 8.75 hours (35 hours divided by 40 hours)

Payout: Maximum 840 hours

## **PROCEDURES**

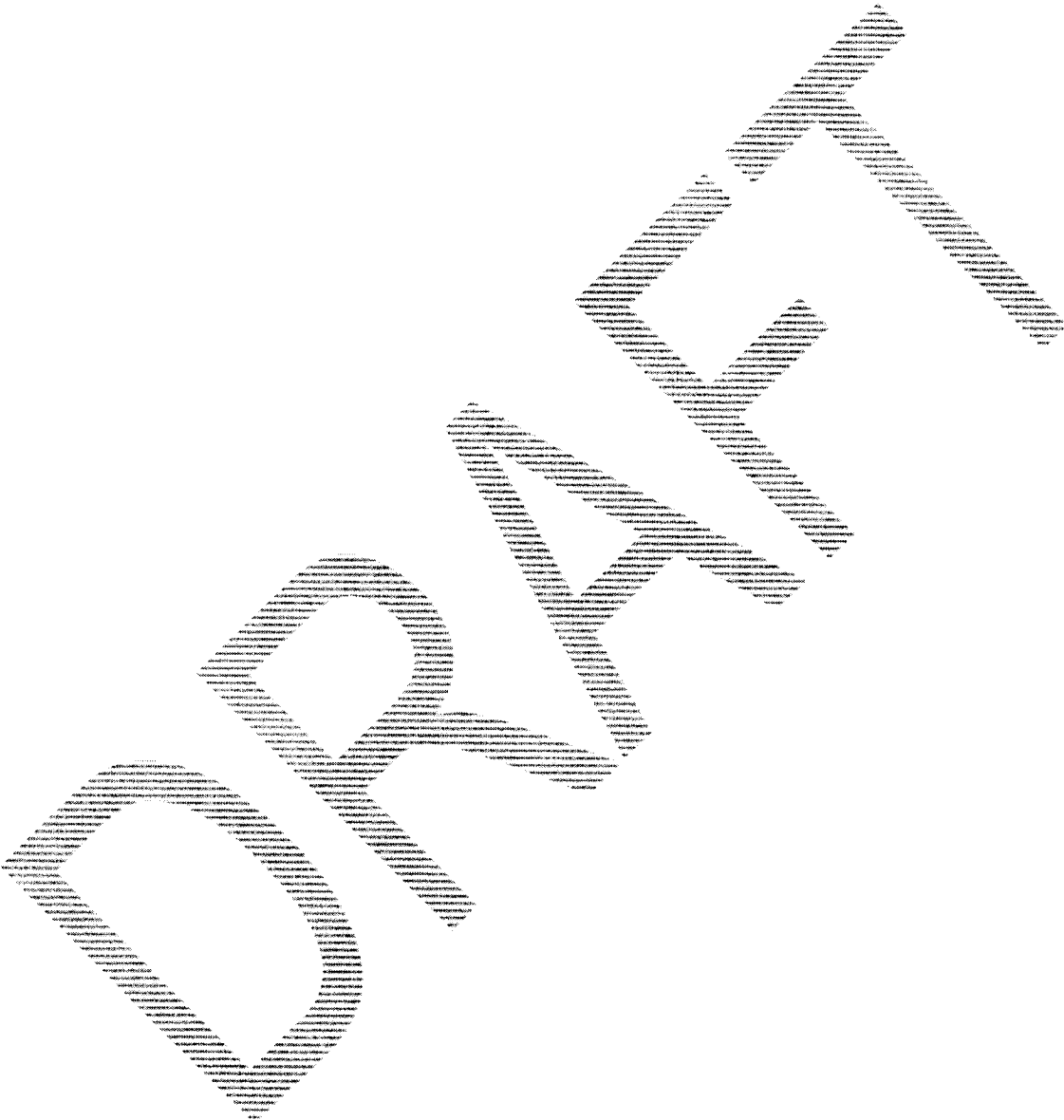
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To avoid conflicts in vacation schedules, judges shall establish procedures for scheduling vacation time.

Court staff use the payroll time and attendance reporting system to record time off and report vacation time accrual balances. Proper codes must be used for reporting absences.

**Questions on this policy:** PCA Financial Services Department (860) 231-2442

**Forms for this policy:** None



## PCA Policy Manual ### SICK TIME

### **POLICY**

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Court staff members, other than temporary employees, who work 20 or more hours per week are eligible for paid sick time in accordance with this policy.

Sick time accrues on a monthly basis after the first full calendar month of employment. Sick time may be used for illness, injury, or medical disability. It may also be used in other special circumstances as set forth below.

After completion of 10 years of service, one-quarter of an employee's accrued sick time is paid upon retirement or death, subject to a maximum payment of 480 hours.

All accruals, limitations on the use of sick time, and payment for unused sick time are prorated for employees who work less than 40 hours per week.

### **GENERAL INFORMATION**

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#### Accrual of Sick Time

Employees accrue sick time at a rate of 10 hours per month, totaling 120 hours per year, prorated for employees who work less than 40 hours per week. Sick time accrues at the beginning of the calendar month.

Sick time continues to accrue in any month during which sick time is taken, including the period of time an employee is on an authorized leave of absence with pay. It does not accrue for any calendar month in which an employee is off the payroll for an aggregate of more than three of the employee's normal work days. Sick time accrues for the first 12 months during which an employee is receiving workers' compensation benefits.

Individuals who transfer from one court to another shall maintain accrued sick time balances.

#### Use of Sick Time

The policies concerning sick time are designed to enable employees to continue to receive pay and benefits when they are unable to work because of illness, injury, or medical disability.

Sick time may be used for pregnancy not more than four weeks before the expected date of delivery and for a period not exceeding six weeks following the date of birth. The expected date of delivery must be certified by the employee's physician. Additional sick time may be taken for pregnancy before or after this period by submitting medical documentation

satisfactory to the judge. An employee is responsible for notifying the PCA Financial Services Department of the date of birth. Appropriate benefit change forms will be sent upon request, and must be returned within 30 days of the date of birth.

The following special circumstances may be charged to accrued sick time:

- Medical or dental appointments for which arrangements cannot be made outside of an employee's normal work schedule
- When attendance would expose others to contagious disease
- A maximum of 40 hours per occasion in the event of death in the immediate family (spouse, father, mother, sister, brother, child, or any other member of the employee's household)
- A maximum of eight hours per occasion for the purpose of traveling to, attending, and returning from funerals of persons other than members of the immediate family, if prior permission is requested and granted by the judge
- A maximum of 80 hours during a calendar year in the event of critical illness or severe injury in the immediate family (same as above) creating an emergency requiring the attendance or aid of the employee
- A maximum of 24 hours in connection with the birth, adoption or taking custody of a child, or the prenatal or postnatal care of a spouse
- A maximum of 240 hours following the adoption or taking custody of a child if the employee is the primary caregiver

Employees who are receiving workers' compensation benefits may elect to draw upon sick time to the extent authorized by the general statutes (to provide for a full day's pay if such is not provided through workers' compensation)

The maximums set forth above are prorated for employees who work less than 40 hours per week.

### Medical Certificate/Examination Requirements

Within the confines of employee medical privacy rights, judges are responsible for verifying that employees are using their accrued sick time properly. The judge should require employees to submit a medical certificate, signed by a licensed physician or other practitioner whose method of healing is recognized by the State of Connecticut, to substantiate requests to charge time off to accrued sick time under the following circumstances:

- Any period of absence consisting of more than five consecutive work days
- When the employee is absent because his or her attendance would expose others to a contagious disease
- When there is a critical illness or severe injury in the employee's immediate family creating an emergency requiring the attendance or aid of the employee
- Any other circumstance causing the judge to be concerned about excessive absenteeism

The medical certificate should verify that the employee (or his/her family member) was medically unable to work from the first date of absence through the last date of absence and

was under the practitioner's care. No information about diagnosis or prognosis is required. A request for a medical certificate to verify use of sick time should be made to the employee before his or her return to duty; preferably at the time the employee calls to notify the judge of his or her absence.

### Payment for Unused Accrued Sick Time

Employees accumulate sick time without limitation. After completion of 10 years of service, one-quarter of an employee's accrued sick time is paid upon retirement or death, subject to a maximum payment of 480 hours, prorated for employees working less than 40 hours per week. Payment for unused accrued sick time will be based upon the employee's rate of pay at the time of retirement or death.

### Transition to Accrual System (Incumbent Employees Only)

On January 5, 2011, court staff who were employed by a probate court before January 5, 2011 will receive a one-time advance accrual in the amount of 40 hours of sick time, prorated for employees scheduled to work less than 40 hours per week during the 2011 calendar year. The monthly accrual rate will be prorated to compensate for the advance accrual. Beginning January 1, 2012, employees will accrue sick time at the normal rates.

Employees hired on or after January 5, 2011 will accrue sick time at the normal rates.

### Proration of Accrual, Use Limitations, and Payout Amounts

All provisions of this policy establishing sick time accrual rates, limitations on the use of sick time for various purposes, and the payout of sick time upon retirement or death are based upon a 40-hour work week. Such amounts are prorated for employees whose standard work week is less than 40 hours.

The following is an example for an employee who works 35 hours per week:

Monthly accrual amount = 8.75 hours (35 hours divided by 40 hours)

Events that can be charged against the accrual and maximum allowable hours:

- Pregnancy/maternity—350 hours
- Death of immediate family – 35 hours
- Attendance at funeral of non-immediate family member – 7 hours
- Critical illness or severe injury of family member – 70 hours
- Birth, adoption, taking custody of child – 21 hours
- Adoption or taking custody – primary caregiver – 210 hours
- Payout: maximum 420 hours

# PROCEDURES

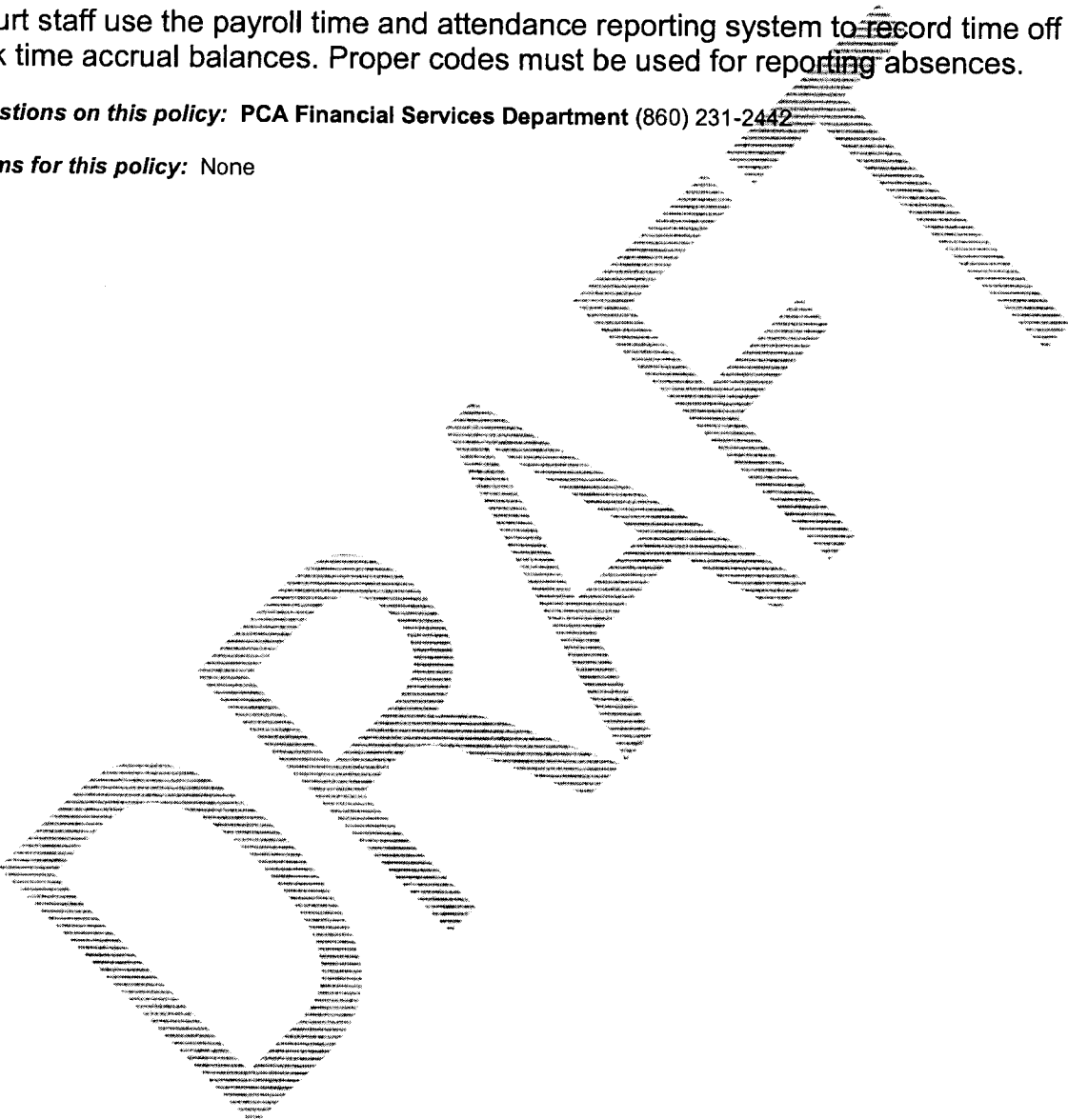
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Employees must notify the judge of any extended absence due to illness, injury, or medical disability. The judge will note the reason for absence as "sick" and will not solicit additional detail regarding the illness beyond duration of the anticipated absence, except as stated under "Medical Certificate/Examination Requirements" above.

Court staff use the payroll time and attendance reporting system to record time off and report sick time accrual balances. Proper codes must be used for reporting absences.

**Questions on this policy:** PCA Financial Services Department (860) 231-2442

**Forms for this policy:** None



## PCA Policy Manual ### PERSONAL TIME

### POLICY

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Court staff members, other than temporary employees, who work 20 or more hours per week are eligible for personal time in accordance with this policy.

Personal time equal to 24 hours for a 40-hour work week (prorated based on employees' normal work schedules) is provided each calendar year.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

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This policy applies to court staff on the regular bi-weekly payroll and does not apply to temporary employees.

Paid personal time is granted to new employees at the conclusion of six months of continuous service, during which period they have not been on a leave of absence without pay for more than 10 working days. Thereafter, it is granted to employees on the first working day of each calendar year following the first calendar year of employment.

Personal time that is not taken in a calendar year does not accumulate or carry over to the following year.

### PROCEDURES

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Personal time can only be taken with the advance approval of the judge.

Court staff use the payroll time and attendance reporting system to record time off and report personal time balances. Proper codes must be used for reporting absences.

**Questions on this policy:** PCA Financial Services Department (860) 231-2442

**Forms for this policy:** None

## PCA Policy Manual ### HOLIDAYS

### POLICY

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Court staff members, other than temporary employees, are eligible to receive up to 12 paid holidays during the calendar year.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

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Before the start of each calendar year, each judge will select 12 holidays to be observed by court staff. Consideration should be given to holidays observed by the town(s) served and state holidays.

The 12 holidays observed by the Judicial Branch and the State of Connecticut are:

New Year's Day  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day  
Lincoln's Birthday  
Washington's Birthday

Good Friday  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Labor Day

Columbus Day  
Veterans' Day  
Thanksgiving Day  
Christmas Day

When a holiday falls on a Saturday, the preceding Friday is observed as a paid holiday by the State of Connecticut. When a holiday falls on a Sunday, the following Monday is observed.

Employees will be granted holiday pay only if the holiday falls on a day that the employee normally works. The amount of holiday pay shall be based on the employee's standard working hours for that day of the week.

Employees who are on an unpaid leave of absence on a scheduled day immediately before or after a holiday shall not be paid for the holiday.

### PROCEDURES

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On or before December 1, each judge will select 12 holidays to be observed in the upcoming calendar year and shall communicate the holiday schedule to PCA and court staff.

Court staff use the payroll time and attendance reporting system to record time off. Proper codes must be used for reporting purposes.

**Questions on this policy:** PCA Financial Services Department (860) 231-2442

**Forms for this policy:** None

## PCA Policy Manual

# ### COMPENSATION ADJUSTMENTS

### POLICY

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The Probate Court Budget Committee may periodically authorize cost of living adjustments (COLAs) and merit increases for court staff. Each judge is responsible for the implementation of COLA and merit increases for the staff of the judge's court in accordance with the budget committee's guidelines.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

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Generally, all court staff, except those whose rates of pay exceed the maximums for their positions, are eligible to receive compensation adjustments in the form of COLAs and merit increases. Temporary employees are not eligible for increases unless specifically authorized by the budget committee. The total pool of funds for compensation adjustments will be determined by the budget committee, provided that approved COLAs and merit increases will be implemented only if the Chief Court Administrator approves a budget for the probate court system that includes funding for the increases. Planned compensation adjustments may be withheld or postponed by action of the budget committee.

### PROCEDURES

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#### COLAs

A COLA is a periodic compensation increase intended to maintain employees in an equivalent position as inflation increases the cost of purchasing goods and services. When a COLA is authorized, all court staff, except those whose existing rate of pay exceeds the maximums for their positions, receive the same percentage increase. In addition, the minimum, market, and maximum rates of pay for each position are increased by the amount of the COLA.

Generally, authorized COLAs become effective at the beginning of the first full pay period in July.

#### Merit Increases

In addition to COLAs, the budget committee may periodically authorize judges to implement merit increases for court staff. The budget committee will allocate funds to each court, and judges will have the discretion to allocate the funds among court staff based upon factors such as education, training, skills, experience, and job performance. The budget committee may establish guidelines for the implementation of merit increases. Employees whose rates of pay exceed the maximums for their positions shall not be eligible for merit increases.

Generally, authorized merit increases become effective at the beginning of the first full pay period in January.

**Questions on this policy:** PCA Financial Services Department (860) 231-2442

**Forms for this policy:** None



## PCA Policy Manual

# ### STAFFING LEVELS AND POSITION CLASSIFICATIONS

## POLICY

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The Probate Court Budget Committee establishes staffing levels for each court, including the allocation of staff among position classifications. Staffing levels are established within the anticipated available funds in the annual budget.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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The budget committee establishes benchmark and transitional staffing levels for each court and reviews staffing levels annually to update benchmark levels, as applicable. The benchmark level represents the optimal number of staff, and the transitional authorization permits courts to maintain a higher level of staffing if the court's staff (or combined staff of merging courts) as of December 31, 2009 was higher than the benchmark level.

Courts are expected to move toward the benchmark staffing levels through voluntary attrition. If a court's transitional authorization is higher than the benchmark, the court is not authorized to fill vacancies resulting from the departure of an employee.

Courts must adhere to the benchmark staffing level that specifies the position classifications available for the court. New hires must fit into this framework.

Staffing levels are expressed as full-time equivalents (FTE). One FTE position equals 40 hours of work per week. For example, a court with a benchmark staffing level of 3.5 can implement staffing equal to 140 hours per week ( $3.5 \times 40 = 140$ ). While courts must be open to the public 40 hours per week, courts are not required to have 40-hour work weeks for court staff. How the total number of authorized work hours is implemented is up to each court, and staff schedules can be staggered to cover the required open hours.

Staffing will be allocated to the following position classifications:

Position Title	Restrictions
Chief Clerk III	Court benchmark exceeds 8.0 FTE
Chief Clerk II	Court benchmark between 4.0-7.9 FTE
Chief Clerk I	Court benchmark 3.9 FTE or less
Court Staff Attorney	Court benchmark exceeds 8.0 FTE
Deputy Chief Clerk	Court benchmark exceeds 8.0 FTE
Clerk	Budget committee authorization
Assistant Clerk	Budget committee authorization
Court Assistant	Budget committee authorization
Probate Court Officer	Limited to regional children courts
Security Officer	Limited to regional children courts
Temporary Staff	Budget committee authorization

A full-time position is defined as one requiring 35 hours or more of work per week; and a part-time position is less than 35 hours of work per week. A temporary staff position is defined as a position authorized for an individual court for a specific purpose and for a limited period of time. Refer to Policy No. ### "Temporary Staffing" for the policy and procedures.

## PROCEDURES

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Staffing levels are determined annually for the fiscal year July 1 through June 30. Courts will submit proposals to the budget committee based on historical staffing levels and anticipated future needs.

The budget committee reviews proposals and finalizes staffing levels by March 31 for the next fiscal year. The budget committee shall establish benchmark staffing levels that take the following factors into account:

- Efficiency of operation
- Population of the probate district as established in the annual population estimate by the Department of Public Health for each city or town as of October 1 of the immediately preceding calendar year
- Workload
- Types of cases heard by the court
- Other factors the budget committee considers appropriate

The budget committee is authorized to consider adjustments to staffing levels during the course of the year to address unforeseen circumstances.

**Questions on this policy:** PCA Financial Services Department (860) 231-2442

**Forms for this policy:** Position Descriptions

## PCA Policy Manual

# ### TEMPORARY STAFFING

## POLICY

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The Probate Court Budget Committee authorizes staffing levels for each court. Courts may hire temporary staff without advance approval if the court's benchmark staffing level is not exceeded. The budget committee must give advance approval for a temporary need exceeding authorized benchmark staffing levels.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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Temporary positions are those established for one of the following reasons:

- To provide services on a relief or as-needed basis to ensure proper coverage
- For a short-term, definite period of employment in order to:
  - Fill in for a staff member who is absent for an extended length of time
  - Work on a special project, the requirements of which (deadlines, needed skills, etc.) preclude the utilization of court staff
  - Alleviate a hardship caused by extended delay in filling a vacancy
- For any other reason that the budget committee determines is reasonable

Typically, the duration of an assignment will not exceed three months, but periods in excess of three months may be approved under appropriate circumstances.

Individuals in temporary positions serve on an as-needed basis, and there is no expectancy of continued employment. Temporary staff are not eligible for benefits other than compensation.

Temporary staff are paid bi-weekly in accordance with the pay schedule established by PCA.

## PROCEDURES

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For temporary staffing needs outlined above that fall within benchmark staffing levels, personnel data shall be provided to the PCA Financial Services Department for payroll processing.

For temporary staffing needs exceeding benchmark staffing levels, judges must submit a Request for Temporary Staffing form to the budget committee for review and approval.

**Questions on this policy:** PCA Financial Services Department (860) 231-2442

**Forms for this policy:** Request for Temporary Staffing Form

## PCA Policy Manual

# ### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

## POLICY

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Workers' compensation benefits are governed by state statutes. Each court shall maintain a workers' compensation insurance policy covering court staff to provide benefits to employees and their families in the event of occupational injuries or illnesses. Premiums for the workers' compensation insurance policy are paid from each court's miscellaneous office budget.

Employees must report an occupational injury or illness to the judge in accordance with the policies set forth below.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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The claim process begins when a judge is notified of an occupational illness or injury. By law, employees may report an injury within one year of its occurrence and an occupational illness within three years of the first manifestation of a symptom of said illness. Employees are urged to advise the judge of an injury or illness as soon as possible. Upon notification to the judge, a report shall be made to the insurance provider in accordance with its requirements. Any communications relating to work-related injuries should be date-stamped so that proper action can be taken.

When an employee is injured during the course of employment due to the actions of a third party (e.g., an employee is involved in an automobile accident while on court business), the employee may file a legal claim in order to receive compensation. An employee must notify the judge in writing if he or she is bringing legal action against a third party.

Notification of acceptance or contesting of a claim will go directly from the insurance provider to the employee. The insurance provider will provide guidance about payment for claims.

## PROCEDURES

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Copies of the workers' compensation information packet should always be available in the probate court.

Whether or not they result in absences from work or claims for payment of medical or related costs, all occupational injuries or illnesses should be reported to the judge immediately. The judge will notify the insurance provider and file a written report.

If an injured employee requires medical treatment, he or she must determine if care should be obtained from a specific network of providers.

The probate court shall notify the PCA Financial Services Department of a claim for workers' compensation for attendance and payroll purposes. Court staff use the Paychex time and attendance reporting system to record time off. Proper codes must be used for reporting absences.

Probate courts can access payroll data from the payroll system in connection with insurance carrier premium audits.

**Questions on this policy:** PCA Financial Services Department (860) 231-2442

**Forms for this policy:** None



# PCA Policy Manual

## ### MISCELLANEOUS OFFICE EXPENSES: ANNUAL BUDGET PROCESS AND DEFINITION OF EXPENSE CATEGORIES

### POLICY

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The Probate Court Budget Committee will establish expense categories and annual expense budgets for each court within anticipated available funding.

In accordance with probate court regulations, lapsed funds shall be returned to the Probate Court Administration Fund.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

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Miscellaneous office budgets include the following expense categories:

- Workers' compensation insurance
- Education, seminars, and meetings
- Dues
- Subscriptions
- Accounting fees
- Bank fees
- Coffee and tea
- Holidays and special occasions
- Other

Expense categories are further defined below:

**Workers' compensation insurance** – A workers' compensation policy should be purchased, and annual insurance premium should be charged to this account.

**Education, seminars, and meetings** – Fees for attendance at educational programs, seminars, and conferences that have an educational component with a direct relationship to probate matters should be allocated to this account. Reimbursement for an individual's meal consumed on the way to a meeting or at a meeting scheduled during the lunch hour is prohibited. Out-of-state conference fees with a direct relationship to probate matters are allowable; however, travel expenses for transportation, lodging, and meals are not considered a reimbursable probate business expense and shall be paid out-of-pocket.

**Dues** – The cost of membership dues in professional organizations may be reimbursed, providing it relates directly to the probate court duties of the judge or employee, and the judge

or employee actively participates in the organization. Examples of dues considered reimbursable: Connecticut Probate Assembly, Connecticut Bar Association (for judges who do not practice law), National College of Probate Judges, and Connecticut Association of Probate Clerks. Dues for civic organizations such as chambers of commerce, Kiwanis, Knights of Columbus, etc. are not reimbursable. Occupational taxes, professional license fees, and client security fund fees are not reimbursable.

Subscriptions – This account includes annual subscriptions for reference materials, magazines, newspapers, and books that relate directly and principally to probate court business. Connecticut Estates Practice Series authored by Gayle Wilhelm and/or Ralph Folsom, are an appropriate court expense.

Accounting fees – Professional fees incurred in 2011 to prepare the 2010 Income Report, Employee Verification Form, and Retained Earnings Analysis are an allowable expense. In addition, service fees incurred to prepare 2010 Forms W-3 and W-2 and payroll tax filings are allowable court expenses. Invoices paid in 2011 shall be for services rendered during the period January 5, 2011 through March 31, 2011. Effective April 1, 2011, accounting fees will not be allowable. Invoices for accounting services must be paid in full by June 30, 2011.

Bank fees – A checking account shall be maintained to pay for miscellaneous office expenses. Checking accounts should be established at banks that do not charge a monthly service fee. The cost of replenishing the check supply is an appropriate business expense.

Coffee and tea – At the judge's discretion, coffee and tea may be purchased for employees and customers of the court. These funds may also be used to purchase water; however, courts are encouraged to show fiscal responsibility and avoid purchasing bottled water unless the tap water at the location is determined to be non-potable. Courts may also purchase simple refreshments when hosting meetings necessary for the conduct of probate court business. Refreshments should only be allowed in group settings. Examples include meetings of a probate court region for which the host court provides morning coffee or situations where a court hosts an afternoon training session and provides soda. Generally, lunch and/or dinner meals are prohibited. Alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited.

Holidays and special occasions – At the judge's discretion, expenditures may be incurred to celebrate a holiday or special occasion. Alcoholic beverages are strictly prohibited. The budget committee has determined that the use of state funds for the purchase of gifts is not allowed.

Other – This category is included in the budget for contingency purposes. These funds may not be used for any expense category defined above.

## **PROCEDURES**

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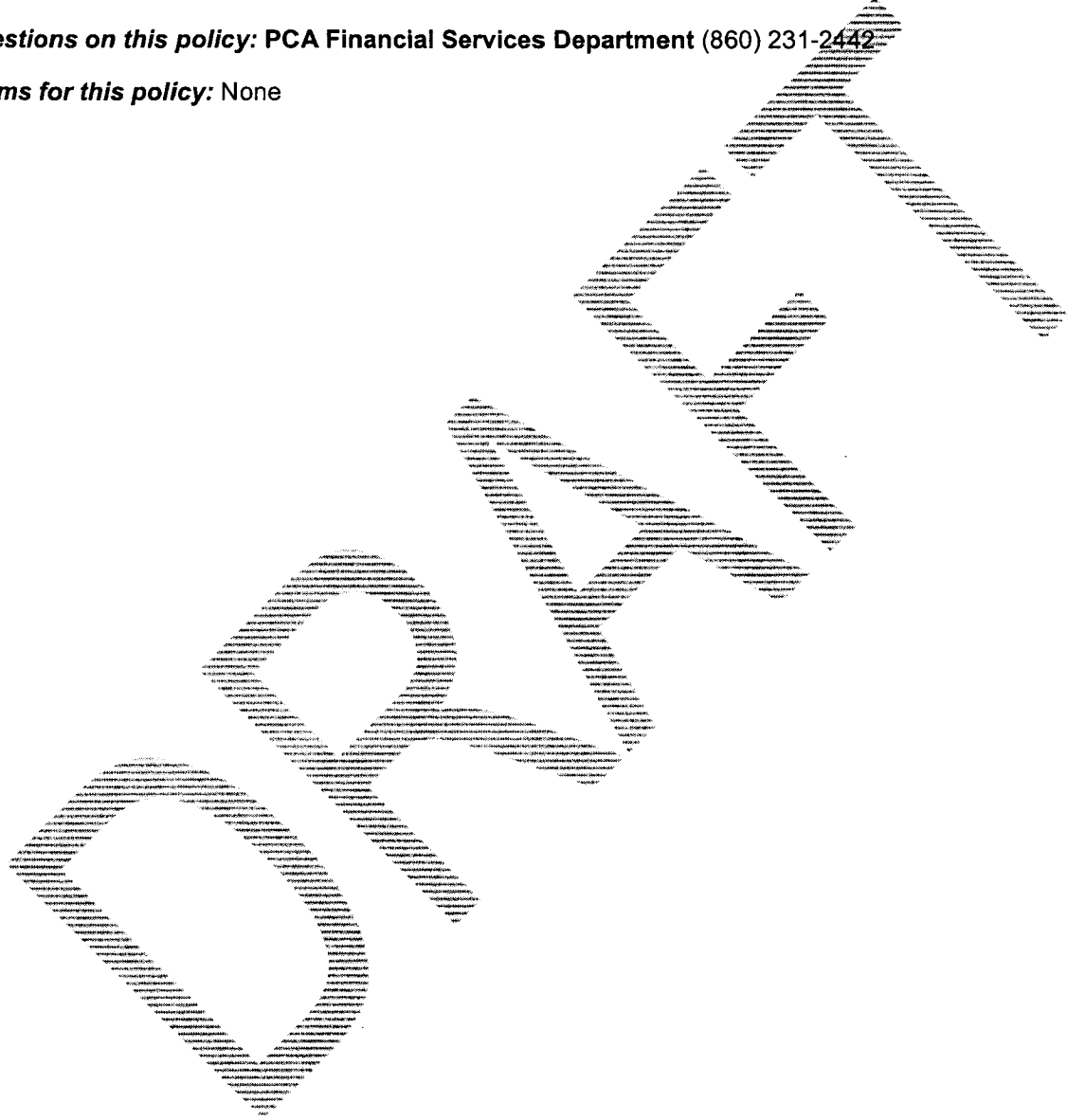
Budgets will be prepared annually for the fiscal year July 1 through June 30. Each court will submit budget proposals to the budget committee based on historical spending and anticipated future needs.

The budget committee will review budget proposals and finalize budgets by March 31 for the next fiscal year. PCA will notify the judges of approved miscellaneous office budgets in June after approval of the annual budget for the probate court system is received from the Chief Court Administrator.

Actual spending in any one expense category may not exceed the budget without advance approval by the budget committee. Requests to exceed the budget shall be submitted to the budget committee in care of the PCA Financial Services Department.

**Questions on this policy:** PCA Financial Services Department (860) 231-2442

**Forms for this policy:** None



# PCA Policy Manual

## ### MISCELLANEOUS OFFICE EXPENSES: PAYMENT PROCESS

### POLICY

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Miscellaneous office expenses will be paid from the Probate Court Administration Fund. Funds will be transferred semi-annually by PCA to each court based on approved budgets.

Courts will maintain a disbursement checking account for the sole purpose of paying miscellaneous office expenses. Funds from any other source must not be deposited into this account.

### GENERAL INFORMATION

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Expenses may be paid by check in one of two ways

1. Paid directly to the *supplier of goods or services*
2. Made payable to the *judge or court staff member* in accordance with the procedures outlined below

Courts must retain original receipt documents.

### PROCEDURES

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PCA will advance budgeted funds on a semi-annual basis for direct deposit into each court checking account.

Judges will be responsible for managing spending within the approved budget and shall not overspend the allotted budget without advance approval by the Probate Court Budget Committee.

Payments for goods or services should be made by a check payable to the supplier. In some cases, it may be more appropriate for the judge or court staff member to pay for an expense and subsequently seek reimbursement from the court. For instance, with the advance approval of the judge, a clerk may attend a Connecticut Association of Probate Clerks (CAPC) dinner meeting and pay cash for the event. In this case, the clerk shall secure a receipt evidencing payment and submit a Reimbursement Request Form to the court. Reimbursement of court funds to a judge or court staff member shall only be made with the submission of a Reimbursement Request Form and appropriate receipt documentation. Reimbursement from a petty cash account or other cash on hand is strictly prohibited.

**Questions on this policy:** PCA Financial Services Department (860) 231-2442

**Forms for this policy:** Reimbursement Request Form

## PCA Policy Manual

# ### MISCELLANEOUS OFFICE EXPENSES: ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

## POLICY

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Courts must account for miscellaneous office expenditures in the categories defined by PCA. Judges are held accountable for managing the actual spending against established budgets. Court staff shall use software such as Quicken, Quickbooks, or Excel for this process.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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Judges have the responsibility of selecting the accounting software that best meets the needs of the court for checkbook activities associated with miscellaneous office expenses, municipal expenditures, and special fund programs, as applicable.

Costs for software purchases or upgrades must be approved in advance by the PCA Information Technology Department, which will install the software or upgrade. Expenses will be charged to the "other" category of the miscellaneous office budget.

## PROCEDURES

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Judges have the responsibility to ensure the following activities are performed in a timely manner:

- Record actual expenditures in the accounting program
- Reconcile check register activity to monthly bank statements
- Monitor monthly and year-to-date expenditures against budgets
- Report actual expenditures versus budget to PCA, as requested
- Prepare summary reports for the annual audit process

Judges may delegate these activities to court staff.

**Questions on this policy:** PCA Financial Services Department (860) 231-2442

**Forms for this policy:** None

## PCA Policy Manual

# REIMBURSABLE MILEAGE AND PARKING EXPENSES

## POLICY

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Judges and court staff will be reimbursed for mileage and parking expenses necessary for the conduct of probate court business within state boundaries. Judges should consider whether the trip is the most efficient and effective way of achieving the objective when deciding whether to travel.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

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Judges and court staff will be reimbursed for mileage and parking arising from:

- Travel directly associated with normal probate business (e.g., travel to hospitals and other locations for hearings, travel to make bank deposits)
- Travel to educational programs presented by PCA or the Connecticut Probate Assembly, including continuing education seminars, clerks' roundtable programs, new clerks' training, and CMS training
- Travel to probate-related educational programs approved by the Judicial Education Standards Committee as set forth in Section 26.3 of the Regulations. This includes programs sponsored by bar associations and accredited educational institutions.
- Judges' travel to Connecticut Probate Assembly meetings and judges' and court staff travel for committee meetings requiring attendance (i.e., committee members, request as a special guest speaker, etc.)
- Travel to Connecticut Association of Probate Clerks (CAPC) meetings and meetings of CAPC committees
- Travel to meetings of the probate regions
- Travel to meetings at PCA at which the attendance of the judge or court staff is requested
- Judges' travel to meetings of professional organizations directly related to the probate court system

Attendance at committee meetings for personal interest is not considered probate business and is not reimbursable.

The amount of reimbursement for mileage will be based upon the actual round-trip mileage from the employee's regular work location (duty station) to the location where the probate business is to be conducted. Employees are expected to use the most direct route possible. In the event of excessive mileage claims, the judge and/or PCA will adjust the amount of reimbursement to reflect the standard distances between cities and towns. Commuting expenses from an employee's residence to the employee's regular duty station are not

reimbursable. If work-related duties require employees to transact business at a location other than their regular duty station during an otherwise normal commute to or from work, only the cost associated with the additional mileage (total miles traveled minus normal commuting miles) will be reimbursed.

Judges and court staff will not be reimbursed for fees or fines for parking or motor vehicle violations.

Judges and court staff should submit requests for mileage and parking reimbursements on a monthly basis. Reimbursements that are submitted six months or more in arrears may require additional documentation.

## **PROCEDURES**

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Judges and court staff may request reimbursement when using personal vehicles for probate court business. Mileage will be reimbursed at the rate published by the State of Connecticut Comptroller's Office for business travel reimbursement to state employees.

Judges and court staff must submit reimbursement requests for travel expenses on the In-State Travel – Mileage and Parking Reimbursement form. The form requires the following information: date of travel, business purpose of the trip, beginning location and beginning mileage, and ending location and ending mileage.

For reimbursement requests from court staff, employees must prepare the form completely and accurately and sign the form. The judge must sign the reimbursement request, thereby authorizing payment and certifying that the reimbursements claimed are appropriate and in accordance with this policy. Although an approval signature is not required for reimbursement to a judge, the judge must sign his/her reimbursement request certifying that the reimbursements claimed are appropriate and in accordance with this policy.

For 2010, mileage will be reimbursed by the court, and the reimbursement form should be filed for audit purposes.

Effective January 1, 2011, reimbursements will be made through payroll and paid from the Probate Court Administration Fund. Forms should be submitted to the PCA Financial Services Department for processing.

**Questions on this policy:** PCA Financial Services Department (860) 231-2442

**Forms for this policy:** In-State Travel – Mileage and Parking Reimbursement Form (Fillable)