

**Request for Action
By
Board of Commissioners**

Approval of Revisions to Employee Handbook

A. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

This Request for Action (“RFA”) seeks approval of revisions to the Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) Employee Handbook in accordance with staff recommendations.

B. DISCUSSION

The Quasi-Public Corporations Accountability and Transparency Act (the “Accountability Act”), which became effective on January 1, 2015, enables, creates, and encourages high standards for transparent, effective, and ethical operations by the boards that provide oversight of the quasi-public corporations enumerated in Section 42-155-3(a) of the Accountability Act. As a quasi-public corporation, RIHousing is subject to the Accountability Act. Section 42-155-4 (b) of the Accountability Act requires the Board of Commissioners to adopt written policies and procedures for, among other things, employee reimbursements of business expenses, and personnel policies, including hiring, dismissing, promoting and compensating employees.

To that end, RIHousing maintains an Employee Handbook that encompasses many of the written policies and procedures required under the Accountability Act, and other policies advisable to be maintained by law or sound business practice. RIHousing conducts periodic reviews and updates of the Employee Handbook. In November 2022, the Human Resources Division, with assistance from Executive and Legal staff, reviewed RIHousing’s Employee Handbook for updates necessary to address statutory changes, actual agency practice, consistency within the document, developments within the agency, and to promote clarity. The Handbook was also reviewed by legal counsel for consistency with state and federal laws. The last comprehensive review of the Employee Handbook took place in 2018. Revisions were presented to and approved by the Board at its December 20, 2018 meeting.

As a result of this year’s review effort, several areas were identified in the Employee Handbook for updates. Two new policies were added: Teleworking Policy and Procedures and Telephone Monitoring. Notable changes were made to several existing policies, including: Disability Accommodations, Short Term Disability Insurance, Holidays, Education Assistance, Vacation and Sick Leave Benefits, and Employee Conduct and Work Rules.

Proposed revisions to the RIHousing Employee Handbook are summarized in Attachment B hereto.

C. RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of Commissioners approve the attached Resolution adopting the revised RIHousing Employee Handbook substantially in the form as presented at this meeting.

D. ATTACHMENTS

- A. Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of RI Housing
- B. Summary of Substantive Revisions to Employee Handbook
- C. Revised Employee Handbook
- D. Revised Employee Handbook - Blacklined

Attachment A

Resolution of the Board of Commissioners of Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation

- Whereas:** Rhode Island Housing and Mortgage Finance Corporation (“RIHousing”) seeks to provide its employees with transparent, clear, and thoughtful policies and procedures as they pertain to benefits, protections, and expected behavior; and
- Whereas:** to provide policies that meet or exceed best practices, comply with state and federal statutory requirements, and foster a progressive workplace with diversity and employee satisfaction, RIHousing has adopted an Employee Handbook to govern employee benefits, rights, procedures, and ethical responsibilities; and
- Whereas:** the Quasi-Public Corporations Accountability and Transparency Accountability Act, Title 42, Chapter 155 of the Rhode Island General Laws (the “Accountability Act”), became effective on January 1, 2015; and
- Whereas:** the Accountability Act seeks to hold all quasi-public corporations, including RIHousing, to the highest standards of transparency and accountability; and
- Whereas:** Section 42-155-4(b) of the Accountability Act requires the Board of a Rhode Island quasi-public corporation to adopt written policies governing travel expenses; personnel, including hiring, dismissing, promoting, and compensating employees of the corporation; and employee reimbursement; and
- Whereas:** RIHousing staff has undertaken a review of the Employee Handbook, which encompasses several of the policies required under the Accountability Act, and has established the need for certain revisions, which will update the Employee Handbook to reflect statutory changes, actual agency practice, consistency within the document, developments within the agency and promote clarity.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY:

- Resolved:** that RIHousing hereby approves and adopts the revised RIHousing Employee Handbook substantially in the form set forth at Attachment C and presented at this meeting; and
- Resolved:** that the Executive Director, Deputy Director, and Chief Operating Officer, each acting singly, shall be authorized and empowered to execute any document or take any other action necessary or desirable to carry out the foregoing resolution, including without limitation, the authority to make updates and revisions to the Employee Handbook on an as-needed basis as they deem necessary to correct errors, maintain consistency with law, and/or address issues of practical concern.

Attachment B

Summary of Substantive Revisions to Employee Handbook

Attachment C

Revised Employee Handbook

Attachment D

Revised Employee Handbook - Blacklined