

Chapter:	Human Resource Management		
Title:	Personnel Records and References		
Policy: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Procedure: <input type="checkbox"/>	Review Cycle: Triennial Author: HR Spec	Adopted Date: 08.2020 Review Date: 06.2024	Related Policies: Credentials Verification and Background Checks Document Retention and Destruction Recruiting and Hiring

Purpose:

Hopeful Horizons (HH) has established this policy to set standards by which personnel information will be used and managed to achieve accuracy, privacy, and legal compliance.

Scope:

This policy applies to:

- All HH Staff Selected HH Staff, as specified:
 HH Board Members HH Volunteers
 Other:

Policy:

HH shall maintain a confidential personnel file for each employee that is the property of HH. Access to personnel files is restricted to authorized employees of Human Resources (HR), supervisors, and managers on a "need to know" basis.

- A. Personnel Files: HR shall establish and maintain a personnel file management practice consistent with best practices and to assure compliance with funder, regulatory and legal requirements.

HHs' personnel file management consists of both digital and hard copy records and documentation. HH personnel files shall include:

1. General Employment Section (i.e., application, reference checks, background checks, performance evaluations, training records, etc.)
2. Employment Eligibility Verification: I-9 Forms and appropriate verification consistent with US Citizen and Immigration policy, [Instructions for Form I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification](#). This form and supporting documentation shall be retained in a separate file for all employees.
3. Medical Information: In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) employee medical records shall be maintained separately from their general personnel record.
4. Payroll Records and Information

- B. Record Storage and Security:

1. Original and hard copy personnel files shall be retained in a locked fireproof storage cabinet.
2. Digital records shall have password protected access and shall be backed up by the Human Resource Business Partner (HRBP).
3. Personnel records shall be retained in accordance with HHs' [Document Retention and Destruction](#) policy.

- C. Outside Personal References: Incoming letters of reference are confidential and cannot be shared with employees.
- D. Employee Access and Inspection: With reasonable notice, and in the presence of HR/designee, an employee may inspect all contents of their personnel file, except for incoming letters of reference. An employee may not remove anything from their personnel file, but photocopies may be made of the contents, except incoming letters of reference. Employees may also object in writing to any of the contents and request that the objection be placed in their file or that the documents in question be corrected.
- E. Change of Status: It is the responsibility of each employee to promptly notify HR of any changes in name, address, telephone number, emergency contact, and/or family status (births, marriage, death, divorce, legal separation, etc.) as an employee's income tax status and group insurance may be affected by these changes. Employees have access and are responsible for updating their profile on the HR personnel records maintained by HHS' HRBP.
- F. Information Requests and Employment References: Requests for information from employee files, including requests for references on former employees shall be referred to HR. Supervisors and other employees are prohibited from providing employment references for former or current employees.

HH shall only verify dates of employment and most recent job title to outside entity. No other employment information shall be given out about a current or former employee without a written authorization and release signed by the individual who is the subject of the inquiry, except to the extent required by law. Under no circumstances shall information regarding performance appraisals or any information regarding disciplinary action be released to an outside entity, unless required by law or court order.

Upon request by an employee, HR may release or verify salary information to credit institutions provided the request for salary information is made in writing and the employee authorizes release of the information.

Communication and Training:

The Board shall receive a copy of the policy at the time of periodic review and will have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions during the approval process. Employees and volunteers shall receive notice of the Board's policy review and approval including notice of any substantive changes. The notice will provide a link to the policy located on the HH website.

Definitions:

1. Human Resource Business Partner (HRBP): A human resource business partner is an HR professional who uses their experience to help companies and their leadership teams create or evolve their HR departments.
2. Medical Information: Retention of an employee's medical documentation may include doctor's notes, Worker's Compensation claims including any medical assessment and reports of treatment, documentation provided by an employee to support a short or long term disability claim and/or request for and documentation supporting a reasonable accommodation for a disability.

3. **Need to Know:** A criterion used in service/treatment confidentiality and professional business and personnel records management that requires the custodian of confidential or private information to establish, prior to disclosure to another HH employee, that the intended recipient must have access to protected information to perform his or her official duties on behalf of the organization.
4. **Personnel File:** A personnel file is a digital or physical way to store all the necessary paperwork associated with each staff member's employment.

Other Related Materials:

NA

References/Legal Authority:

[Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, As Amended, ADA.gov, 2024.](#)

[Labor and Employment \(41.1\), South Carolina Code of Laws, 2024](#)

[Keeping Personnel Files: Best Practices and What to Include, Indeed, 2024.](#)

Change Log:

Date of Change	Description of Change	Responsible Party
06.2024	This policy is updated to the new template and adds communication and training, definitions, other related material and references as applicable.	R. Lucovich, HR Spec.