

**STATE OF ARKANSAS**



**Department of  
Shared Administrative  
Services**

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# **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

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# SHARED ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT RECEIPT





## Shared Administrative Services

# DEPARTMENT FUNCTIONS

## ARKANSAS DATA OFFICE

The Arkansas Data Office (ARData) serves as a hub for enterprise-shared services focused on enhancing digital service delivery. By fostering a culture of data-driven decision-making and providing access to critical data and analytics tools. ARData empowers state departments to streamline operations, improve efficiency, and deliver impactful services to the people of Arkansas. These statewide shared services serve as the foundation of ARData's operations, enabling the effective management and utilization of data throughout the state. ARData's day-to-day operations include the following:

- Arkansas Data Hub
- Arkansas LAUNCH
- Arkansas Research Environment
- Arkansas Statewide Longitudinal Data System
- Business Intelligence
- Digital Transformation
- Governor's Workforce Cabinet
- Identity and Master Data Management
- Integrated Service Delivery
- Robotic Process Automation

## ARKANSAS STATE SURPLUS

Arkansas State Surplus handles all surplus property for the State of Arkansas. The property is sold to all state entities, tax-supported local governments, schools, and non-profit organizations. All unsold property is available for public purchase each Wednesday and through online sales. Arkansas State Surplus's day-to-day operations include the following:

- Approves trade-in requests for personal property and approves disposal of damaged personal property (Property includes boats, cameras, cars, chairs, desks, filing cabinets, etc.)
- Handles insurance claims for state-owned totaled vehicles

## BUSINESS OPERATIONS

The SAS Business Operations office is responsible for the Department's accounts payable/receivable, budgeting functions, human resources, purchasing and asset management, and travel. The Business Operations office day-to-day includes the following:

- Aids SAS divisions with procurement of commodities, technical and professional services, vendor maintenance, and all purchase/travel card transactions
- Facilitates travel arrangements, including out-of-state travel authorizations, airfare, and hotel and conference registrations
- Manages SAS assets
- Provides human resource services for SAS divisions

## DIVISION OF BUILDING AUTHORITY

The Division of Building Authority (DBA) acts as the state's agent in all state lease negotiations. They provide direction, assistance, and approvals to departments in all aspects of capital improvement projects and real property transactions, and actively maintains and operates DBA-owned or managed buildings efficiently and economically pursuant to laws, rules, and regulations. DBA's's day-to-day operations include the following:

- Assists with property purchase or disposition transactions
- Leasing agent for private sector and state-owned property leasing
- Maintains and operates a building portfolio of 1.6 million square feet
- Manages the Sustainable Building Revolving Loan Program to promote energy-efficient upgrades
- Provides architectural and engineering design reviews and conducts formal bidding and site inspection for capital improvement projects

## EMPLOYEE BENEFITS DIVISION

The Employee Benefits Division (EBD) oversees the Health and Life Insurance Plans for State and Public School employees. EBD serves more than 160,000 members from state departments and agencies and 230+ school districts. Coverage reaches new hires, active employees, retirees, as well as covered dependents. They strive to ensure members have access to healthcare by providing affordable plans with valuable benefits. EBD's day-to-day operations include the following:

- Audits and provides oversight of vendor partners that serve ARBenefits members
- Operationalizes decisions made by the State and Public School Health Benefits Advisory Commissions and Board of Finance
- Provides customer service to members, as well as, agency or school district health insurance representatives
- Travels the state to educate members about the ARBenefits plan and benefits

## GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The Division of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) promotes the efficient development, maintenance, and distribution of Arkansas's geographic information resources. GIS also houses the Division of Land Surveys. Its vision is to be the national leader for the archival, preservation and restoration of the Public Land Survey System in the state. GIS's day-to-day operations include the following:

- Arkansas Centerline File
- Arkansas Digital Orthoimagery Program
- Arkansas Master Address Program
- Corner Restoration Program
- County Assessor Mapping Program
- Fire District Boundaries for E911
- Municipal Boundary and Annexation Program
- Survey Plat Archival

## OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is responsible for administering the state's personnel system and establishing necessary policies and procedures to ensure system uniformity in accordance with state and federal laws. OPM provides for the efficient utilization of state resources and the effective management of classification and compensation, payroll, and training. OPM's day-to-day operations include the following:

- Develops a catalog of training courses for employee development and job performance
- Develops the statewide pay plan and establishes policies for salary administration
- Establishes and maintains the statewide performance evaluation system
- Establishes job classifications, including job duties and minimum requirements to perform each job
- Manages programs: grievance procedure, catastrophic leave, and employee suggestions
- Manages the state's human resources information system and ensures timely payments of all employees
- Reviews departmental organization structures and provides executive recommendations on department budget and interim requests for additional positions, reclassifications, and classification grade assignments

## OFFICE OF STATE PROCUREMENT

The Office of State Procurement (OSP) serves the state and its citizens by effectively, efficiently, and ethically procuring commodities and services for the state. OSP administers Arkansas Procurement Law, which fosters fair market competition for state contracts and helps ensure fair and equitable procurement procedures. OSP's day-to-day operations include the following:

- Assists state entities with the procurement of commodities and services
- Determines protests of solicitations
- Notifies the public of opportunities to bid on state contracts and of contract awards
- Registers vendors interested in supplying the State with commodities or services
- Screens service contracts submitted for legislative review
- Manages the state purchase card program, travel cards, and fuel/fleet cards

## OFFICE OF STATE TECHNOLOGY

The Office of State Technology (OST) empowers the citizens of Arkansas through technology. The State Cybersecurity Office establishes security standards and policies for information technology in state government and serves as the focal point for cybersecurity issues. The office monitors and protects the state network and responds to any threats to the state's technology infrastructure. OST's day-to-day operations include the following:

- Hosts critical applications that enable citizens to access online public services
- Provides the following services to state and public school entities: data center hosting services, network services, operational services, professional services, storage and backup services, and voice services. *Examples include application development, data storage, email, network security, private cloud for the public sector, and Windows desktop support.*
- Works 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to ensure public services provided by state departments, boards and commissions, K-12 public schools, institutions of higher education, and city and county governments are always available to the citizens of Arkansas



# Shared Administrative Services HELPFUL INFORMATION

## COMMON ACRONYMS

Arkansas Administrative Statewide Information System – AASIS  
Arkansas Data Office – ARData  
Arkansas Freedom of Information Act – FOIA  
Arkansas Public Employees Retirement System - APERS  
Arkansas State Employee Association – ASEA  
Arkansas State Employee Benefit Advisors – ARSEBA  
Children’s Educational Annual Leave – CEAL  
Deferred Retirement Option Plan – DROP  
Department of Finance and Administration – DFA  
Department Shared Administrative Services – SAS  
Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account - Dependent Care FSA  
Division of Building Authority – DBA

Employee Assistance Program – EAP  
Employee Benefits Division – EBD  
Fair Labor Standard Act – FLSA  
Family Medical Leave Act – FMLA  
Flexible Spending Account – FSA  
Geographic Information Systems – GIS  
Health Savings Account – HSA  
Healthcare Flexible Spending Account – Healthcare FSA  
Leave Without Pay – LWOP  
Office of Personnel Management – OPM  
Office of Property Risk – OPR  
Office of State Procurement – OSP  
Office of State Technology – OST

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## HELP DESKS

Arkansas Public Employees Retirement System (APERS)  
501-682-7800

Arkansas Administrative Statewide Information Systems (AASIS)  
501-683-2255

SAS OST Call Center  
501-682-4357

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## BENEFITS

SAS Employee Benefits Division  
[sas.arkansas.gov/employee-benefits/](https://sas.arkansas.gov/employee-benefits/)  
Ask.EBD@arkansas.gov  
501-682-9656

Health Advantage  
[www.healthadvantage-hmo.com](http://www.healthadvantage-hmo.com)  
800-482-8416

Colonial Life Insurance  
[www.coloniallife.com](http://www.coloniallife.com)  
855-868-6009

Lucet  
Employee Assistance Program  
[eap.lucethealth.com](http://eap.lucethealth.com)  
Code: ARBenefits  
800-624-5544

Beneliance  
Flexible Spending Account (FSA)  
Health Savings Account (HSA)  
[arbenefits.summitfor.me](http://arbenefits.summitfor.me)  
866-762-2149

Arkansas Diamond Deferred  
[www.my.voya.com](http://www.my.voya.com)  
501-301-9900

Arkansas State Employee Benefit Advisors (ARSEBA)  
[www.arseba.com](http://www.arseba.com)  
501-224-5234

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## HELPFUL LINKS

SAS Website  
[sas.arkansas.gov/](https://sas.arkansas.gov/)

SAS Intranet  
[https://arkdhs.sharepoint.com/\\_layouts/15/sharepoint.aspx](https://arkdhs.sharepoint.com/_layouts/15/sharepoint.aspx)

## SECTION 1—EMPLOYEE CONDUCT STANDARDS

The conduct standards listed below are the minimum standards that Shared Administrative Services (SAS) expects all employees to follow. SAS employees are also expected to comply with standards and requirements, including laws, regulations, rules, judicial and administrative decisions, department interpretations, and all reasonable work-related instructions. A violation of any of these could result in disciplinary action pursuant to the SAS disciplinary policy.

### 1.1 Anti-Fraud and Code of Ethics

SAS employees have a responsibility to comply with the policy and procedures that aid in preventing fraud and support the department's culture of honesty and ethical behavior. SAS will not condone employee conduct that either violates or has the appearance of violating the law, including the ethical provisions. SAS employees must review the [Code of Ethics](#) and sign an annual acknowledgment affirming they received a copy and reviewed it.

SAS employees are responsible for reporting all suspected violations of federal or state law involving SAS employees, or anyone contracted to provide services to SAS. Reports should be made to the SAS Human Resources Administrator immediately upon the employee becoming aware of a suspected violation.

Refer to the SAS [Code of Ethics Policy](#) for more information.

### 1.2 Computer Access Confidentiality

In the course of your work, you may have access to information confidential to SAS or to an individual employee or department. Unauthorized use or disclosure of confidential information may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment. Violation of confidentiality may also create civil or criminal liability.

Your sign-on code and password(s) (network, mainframe, test, and application systems) will be used as personal identification for purposes of data access in the same manner as your signature is used for identification.

- Do not attempt to access information on the SAS network except to meet needs specific to your job/position
- Do not disclose your sign-on password code(s) to anyone unless there is a necessity based on your job description or standards of practice
- Do not divulge any knowledge that you gain about SAS computer or network security
- Do not leave a terminal or computer workstation without locking the computer
- Employees will maintain compliance with policies and procedures, including the following: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act, National Institute of Standards and Technology, and State Law
- If you discover any breach of confidentiality or unauthorized access, notify your manager, who will notify the appropriate SAS management staff
- Never attempt to learn another person's sign-on password code unless there is a necessity based on your job description or standards of practice

### **1.3 General Confidentiality**

All agency, employee, and proprietary information is considered confidential and should not be used for purposes other than its intended use. You have an ethical and legal obligation to protect confidential information used or obtained while performing duties and understand that all the policies on confidentiality apply equally to data stored on a computer and in paper records. Authorization to disclose information is made only by SAS management and only on a need-to-know basis. Compliance must be maintained with policies and laws such as:

- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act
- Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act
- National Institute of Standards and Technology
- Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard

Unauthorized use of, or access to, confidential information may result in discipline up to and including termination of employment. Violation of confidentiality may also create civil or criminal liability. Vendors and contractors doing work for SAS are responsible for and are held accountable for communicating the SAS confidentiality policy to their staff.

### **1.4 Monitoring Access to Confidential Data**

SAS divisions that support computer information systems will monitor use of the systems and will report access or confidentiality violations immediately to their manager. All staff and employees are responsible for immediately reporting any apparent violations of this confidentiality policy to their manager.

### **1.5 Information and Information Technology Security**

Information and information technology systems are essential and valuable assets of the State of Arkansas. Information created with state resources is state property. All employees, contractors, and vendors are responsible for protecting information from unauthorized access, modification, disclosure, and destruction. Prudent information security policies, standards, and procedures are necessary to ensure that the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of data, network, and processing resources for Arkansas are not compromised.

### **1.6 Internet, Email, and General Computer Acceptable Use**

SAS employees must adhere to these guidelines and SAS policy governing the internet, email, and general computer acceptable use. SAS employees may access, use, or share SAS information only to the extent it is authorized and necessary to fulfill their assigned job duties.

SAS employees have no reasonable expectation of privacy when using SAS devices or systems. SAS reserves the right to monitor and log all SAS equipment, systems, and network traffic without notice, including monitoring files, email, and website usage. The following activities, while not exhaustive, are prohibited:

- Engaging in any activity for personal financial gain, such as buying or selling commodities or services with a profit motive
- Installing or using any equipment or software without prior approval by the Office of State Technology (OST) Chief Information Officer, including, but not limited to personal computers, printers, scanners, flash drives, compact disc readers, audio and video players, smartphones, and personally owned or downloaded software or shareware

- Interfering with the security or operation of the computer systems, including security breaches or disruptions of network communication
- Introducing malicious programs into the network or server

### **1.7 Email and Microsoft Teams**

SAS employees should only use their SAS email accounts and Microsoft Teams for work-related purposes. Employees shall have no expectation of privacy in anything they store, send, or receive on SAS's email/Teams system. Employees must use extreme caution when opening email attachments or clicking on any links contained in the email. In addition, SAS employees shall not use SAS email addresses and associated passwords to register for any personal online accounts. Sending personal emails using the SAS email address should be kept to a minimum, understanding that any email sent on the state network may be considered public information.

When conducting calls or meetings using web conference platforms, such as Microsoft Teams, employees are expected to present themselves professionally with their camera on. This applies to all meetings, whether an employee is on-site or working remotely.

### **1.8 Social Media**

When using social media, SAS employees shall not expressly or implicitly attribute personal statements, opinions, or beliefs to SAS. If an employee expresses their beliefs or opinions, they must not, expressly, or implicitly, represent themselves as an employee or representative of SAS. Employees may not use trademarks, logos, or other SAS intellectual property connected with any social media activity.

## SECTION 2—EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS

### 2.1 Employment-at-Will

Arkansas is an “employment-at-will” state. This means that an SAS employee may be terminated with or without cause if the termination is not for an illegal reason. The employer and the employee can both terminate employment without cause or notice. Nothing in this handbook or any other document, policy, or procedure used by SAS creates an expressed or implied right or expectation of continued employment or contract.

### 2.2 Equal Employment Opportunity

The State of Arkansas does not discriminate in access to employment opportunities or employment, or practices based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, or genetic information. Individuals are hired based on their qualifications for each position. All employment decisions and other personnel actions are made per Equal Employment Opportunity principles. Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation by any employee shall constitute grounds for disciplinary action.

#### 2.2 (a) Americans with Disabilities Act and Reasonable Accommodation

SAS employees shall not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities. SAS will provide reasonable accommodations as required by law to otherwise qualified applicants or employees with disabilities in all employment practices, including job application procedures, hiring, advancement, job assignments, leaves of absence, transfers, compensation, benefits, and job training. Employment opportunities will not be denied to an otherwise qualified applicant or employee because of the need to make a reasonable accommodation to the known physical or mental impairment(s).

#### 2.2 (b) Age Discrimination in Employment Act

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) protects job applicants and employees who are 40 years of age and older. SAS employees shall not refuse to hire, discharge any individual, or discriminate against an individual concerning compensation terms, conditions, or privileges of employment because of the individual’s age. Furthermore, SAS employees shall not limit, segregate, or classify employees in any way that would deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect their status as an employee because of such individual’s age.

#### 2.2 (c) Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is not tolerated at SAS. Sexual harassment is unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature that affects an individual’s employment; unreasonably interferes with work performance; or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. Sexual harassment includes sexual contact as defined in the Federal Guidelines (29 CFR Ch. XIV, subsection 1604.11), Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended and the Arkansas Civil Rights Act at Arkansas Code Annotated § 16-123-101 *et seq.*

Sexual harassment can be physical, including unwelcome touching or gesturing. Sexual harassment can also be verbal, including unwelcome requests for a date or sexual favors, lewd remarks, or sounds. Sexual harassment can be visual, including unwelcome exposure to sexual photos, cartoons, or drawings.

Any SAS employee who believes that they have been discriminated against, harassed, or retaliated against is encouraged to file a complaint with SAS Human Resources.

### 2.3 Possession of a Weapon

SAS is committed to providing a safe environment for employees and visitors while respecting the rights of individuals who are concealed-carry licensees with the enhanced endorsement as permitted by Arkansas law. Except as permitted by law, including, but not limited to, Arkansas Code Annotated § 5-73-322(g), possession, discharge, or other use of weapons on any grounds, buildings, or vehicles owned or operated by SAS is strictly prohibited. Furthermore, storing any weapon, including handguns, is prohibited, except that a concealed handgun may be stored in a licensee's locked and unattended motor vehicle. SAS employees shall comply with an alternative worksite's safety and security policies (meetings, conferences, facilities, etc.). Under no circumstances will weapons be permitted in disciplinary meetings unless a law enforcement officer controls the weapon.

### 2.4 Hiring Relatives and Marriage Between SAS Employees

Arkansas law prohibits the hiring of relatives by public officials and prohibits an employee from supervising a relative. A public official must not appoint, employ, promote, advance, or advocate for appointment, employment, promotion, or advancement, in or to a position in the department in which the official is serving. This also applies when the official exercises jurisdiction or control over any person's relative of the public official and a department employee. For purposes of this section, an employee includes individuals in extra-help positions.

Relatives will not be permitted to work in any capacity where one relative might supervise another, including participating in decisions involving hiring, promoting, salary increases, or other personnel-related matters of interest to a relative. A temporary change in supervision resulting in the supervision of a relative will not be considered a violation of Arkansas law, provided the supervision does not exceed 30 days. No hiring, firing, pay adjustments, or other personnel actions may occur during this temporary period of supervision.

Related employees working within SAS will be reviewed for compliance with [Executive Order 98-04](#), Arkansas Code Annotated § 21-1-401–408, Arkansas Code Annotated § 25-16-1001–1007, and related SAS policies. If an applicant has a relative within any SAS division, the SAS Human Resources Administrator will forward the request to the Secretary of SAS or designee for approval before a job offer can be extended.

If SAS employees plan to marry each other, they must complete and sign the [Marriage Disclosure Form](#). The employees must submit the form to the Human Resources Administrator to review any hiring violations.<sup>1</sup>

### 2.5 Probationary Period

SAS has a six (6) month probation period for all newly hired employees for training, development, and management assessment. Employees who transfer within SAS—either by promotion, demotion, or lateral transfer—will be placed in a three-month probationary period unless the transfer is due to reorganization. The Secretary or division director may extend this probationary period, and they must notify the employee before the extension. Employees within their new hire probation status do not have access to the grievance process during this time; however,

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<sup>1</sup> Relative: A husband, wife, mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother, sister, stepbrother, stepsister, half-brother, half-sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, daughter, son, stepdaughter, stepson, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, or niece.

employees who transferred within SAS from another division may be eligible to use the grievance process.

Employees are eligible during the non-disciplinary probationary period to apply for other positions. Completing the non-disciplinary probationary period does not entitle the employee to remain employed for any definite time. SAS and the employee are free at any time, with or without notice or cause, to end the employment relationship.

## **2.6 Job Performance and Performance Evaluations**

Employees are expected to perform their job duties competently and produce a high-quality work product. Supervisors should timely address any performance issues with employees. Employees are encouraged to initiate conversations with their supervisors if additional feedback is needed.

Mid-year and formal performance evaluations are conducted annually. These reviews include a written performance document and a discussion between the employee and the supervisor about job performance and expectations for the coming year. Employees who received a written disciplinary action during the rating period will not be eligible for a merit increase.

## **2.7 Professionalism**

SAS employees are expected to be professional, conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the standards of their job, and work in a cooperative manner with their coworkers and supervisors. Inappropriate behavior, including foul language and yelling, will not be tolerated. All forms of communication, including emails and messages on platforms such as Teams, should remain professional. Personal opinions, beliefs, and informal content such as memes, gifs, or links unrelated to work are not appropriate.

## **2.8 Promotion/Demotion**

A promotion is a change from one position to another position with a higher pay grade on the same pay table or within the same job series, not to exceed the maximum. A promoted employee may receive up to a ten percent (10%) salary increase or will have their salary adjusted to the entry-level salary for that pay grade, whichever is higher.

A demotion is a change in an employee's job assignment from a position in one classification to another of a lower pay grade within the same pay table. Employees demoted to a lower grade in the same pay table will receive a decrease in salary of ten percent (10%). An employee's pay rate after demoting must be within the new classification's minimum and maximum range of the pay grade.

Refer to [OPM Policy #25](#) for more information on promotions and demotions.

## SECTION 3—PERSONNEL POLICIES AND WORK STANDARDS

SAS employees are expected to be aware of all personnel policies and work standards and fulfill these expectations. If an employee has questions about the handbook or SAS policy, they should speak with their immediate supervisor. The following personnel policies are not a complete or comprehensive list of the department's standards, policies, and procedures. All SAS personnel policies are accessible on the [SAS Intranet](#). All standards and policies of SAS apply to all divisions. Some divisions or offices of SAS may have additional standards by which those employees must abide.

### 3.1 Career Service Recognition Payments

SAS employees who achieve ten (10) full years of service may be awarded annual career service recognition payments on the anniversary date of the completion of such service. The service must have been either an elected or regular full-time position, classified or non-classified, to receive the full amount of the recognition payment. Employees who work part-time in regular-salary positions may receive annual career service recognition payments pro-rata.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Career Service Recognition Payments Policy](#) for more information.

### 3.2 Compensatory and Overtime

SAS is authorized to provide compensatory time at a rate of time and a half as compensation for overtime work. Any hours worked over 40 hours in a workweek for non-exempt employees must have prior approval by the division director. Paid leave—such as holiday, sick, or annual leave—does not count toward hours worked for overtime purposes. SAS employees will be paid quarterly for all unused compensatory time accrued during the preceding quarter. Any accrued compensatory hours that exceed 240 hours will be paid as overtime on the next regular pay cycle. An employee may request to use the accrued compensatory time before the quarterly payout. All accrued compensatory time will be paid out when an employee separates employment with SAS. Employees exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) are not eligible for overtime.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Overtime and Compensatory Time Policy](#) for more information.

### 3.3 Concurrent Employment

An SAS employee may not be employed by more than one (1) department unless the SAS Secretary grants written approval. The two (2) positions should not interfere or conflict, and the combined salaries cannot exceed the maximum salary authorized for either position. However, a state employee may work as an adjunct professor as needed, and the maximum salary level may be exceeded if requirements for concurrent employment are met.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Concurrent Employment Policy](#) for more information.

### 3.4 Criminal Background Checks

SAS requires a criminal background check for disqualifying convictions on all SAS employees and applicants before an offer of employment and continued employment.

Refer to the [SAS Criminal Background Check Policy](#) for more information.

### **3.5 Disciplinary Policy**

SAS does not have a progressive discipline policy. Supervisors are responsible for determining the appropriate level of discipline for a specific handbook violation, SAS policy violation, or any other action that requires discipline. Supervisors should consider all the facts and mitigating or aggravating circumstances surrounding the violation in deciding the level of discipline and should consult with SAS Human Resources Administrator as needed.

Refer to the [SAS Disciplinary Policy](#) for more information.

### **3.6 Drug-Free Workplace and Employee Drug Testing**

SAS is committed to a drug-free workplace to promote employee, customer, and public safety, health, and efficiency. SAS recognizes that alcohol and drug use in the workplace pose significant safety and health risks to the employee and others. SAS complies with the Drug-Free Workplace Acts of 1988 and Arkansas law, which prohibit the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance where SAS employees work, including all SAS owned or leased vehicles, or while conducting business for the State of Arkansas.

The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance in an SAS building or on SAS property is prohibited. SAS employees must notify their supervisor before beginning the workday if they take a prescribed or over-the-counter medication that affects alertness, judgment, or behavior in ways that are likely to impair job performance.

Refer to the [SAS Drug-Free Workplace Program and Testing Policy](#) for more information.

### **3.7 Grievance Policy and Procedure**

The SAS Grievance Policy and Procedure allows eligible employees to file a grievance if they allege their termination or suspension without pay was inconsistent with SAS's Disciplinary Policy. This opportunity is provided through established steps and procedures to ensure fair resolution to eligible employees within a reasonable timeframe. An employee new to SAS who is on an initial six (6) month or extended new-hire probationary period will not have access to the grievance process.

Refer to the [SAS Disciplinary Policy](#) and the [SAS Grievance Policy and Procedure](#) for more information.

### **3.8 Our Commitment to Safety**

SAS is committed to providing a safe, violence-free workplace for our employees. As such, SAS employees shall not engage in any physical confrontation with an individual or behave in a threatening or violent manner. SAS will not tolerate threats, threatening language, or any other acts of aggression or violence made toward or by any SAS employee. A threat may include any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, attempts to intimidate others, menacing gestures, stalking, or any other hostile, aggressive, or destructive actions taken for intimidation. If an employee has issues with a supervisor or manager, it should be addressed with management, through the chain of command, or directly with the SAS Chief General Counsel.

This guidance covers any behavior in the workplace or at SAS-sponsored functions. Any employee who witnesses or is the recipient of violent or threatening behavior should promptly inform their supervisor or division director. All threats will be investigated, and appropriate action will be taken. No employee will be subject to retaliation, intimidation, or discipline because of reporting a threat in good faith.

### **3.9 Personal Appearance/Dress Code**

Employees should use good judgment and discretion in their dress and appearance while maintaining good hygiene. Personal appearance shall be appropriate to the job assignment and location. SAS employees must follow a more formal business dress code when attending a public meeting at the State Capitol, Governor's Office, Legislature, board meetings, or presentations. Employees should direct any questions about the dress code to their supervisor. A reasonable accommodation request may be made to the employee's immediate supervisor or the SAS Human Resources Administrator. SAS observes Casual Jean Fridays, allowing employees to wear jeans on Fridays. Jeans should be clean, in good condition, and free of excessive wear, rips, or distressing.

### **3.10 Personnel Records**

All information maintained in the Arkansas Administrative Statewide Information System, ARCareers, or any other system that maintains personnel records and all related components shall be confidential. Access to and use of personnel records is restricted to employees with a legitimate business purpose. At no time shall personnel records be disseminated or shared with unauthorized personnel. In addition, any copyrighted material, including state-owned software, is protected by copyright laws, and shall not be copied without permission.

### **3.11 Political Activity**

Arkansas law prohibits state employees from engaging in partisan political activities during working hours. Employees are not to endorse candidates, including the Governor, in their official capacity as state employees. The State further prohibits using any campaign literature (including bumper stickers) on personal vehicles when using these vehicles to perform official duties for which the State may reimburse them.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Political Activity Policy](#) for more information.

### **3.12 Political Freedom**

State employees are not prohibited from communicating with an elected public official concerning matters related to the employee's job, except for matters exempted from disclosure under the Arkansas Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Furthermore, state employees are not prohibited from exercising a right or privilege under the FOIA. SAS employees will not be subjected to discipline, threats of discipline, reprimands (either oral or written), or notations in their personnel files because they exercised the right to communicate with an elected public official or exercised a right or privilege under the FOIA. An employee who has intentionally made untrue allegations to an elected official concerning matters related to the employee's job may be subject to discipline.

### **3.13 Prohibited Activities**

An SAS employee who willfully refuses to perform their employment duties will be terminated and is ineligible for employment with a public employer in any position or capacity for twelve (12) months after being terminated for willfully refusing to perform the duties of their employment.

An SAS employee willfully refuses to perform duties of employment when, acting in concert with one (1) or more public employees, they:

- Physically obstruct the activity or operation of SAS or any public employer
- Physically impedes the operations of SAS or any public employer
- Strikes or walk away from the duties of their employment with SAS

“Strike” means a refusal to work organized by two (2) or more public employees as a form of protest to gain a concession from a public employer.

### **3.14 Public Information**

SAS employees shall fully comply with FOIA. SAS employees should presume that any work-related documents, reports, notes, communications, emails, photographs, or recordings in any format are subject to public disclosure under FOIA, regardless of whether the record was made or stored on an SAS issued or personal device. Any employee who receives a request for public records should immediately notify the Executive Assistant to the Secretary and the SAS Chief General Counsel.

Refer to the [SAS FOIA Policy](#) for more information.

### **3.15 Reduction in Force**

Reductions in the workforce may be due to significant organizational structure changes, shortage of funds or work, abolishment of positions or duties, loss of functional responsibility by SAS, or the loss or non-renewal of federal funding, grants, or other special funds.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Reduction in Force and Severance Pay Policy](#) for more information.

### **3.16 Remote, Alternative and Flexible Work Schedules**

SAS employees are given the benefit of being allowed to work remote and/or flexible work schedules if their job roles allow. Remote work provides SAS employees an opportunity to work at a location other than their regularly assigned office location. Employees are allowed to work remotely on a case-by-case basis. An alternative work schedule allows employees to work a compressed schedule, only available for Division of Building Authority building operations staff and State Surplus warehouse agents. A flexible work schedule allows employees to utilize a work schedule that differs from normal business hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. A flexible work schedule may allow employees to come in earlier, come in later, leave earlier, or leave later while still working a five-day, 40-hour workweek between the hours of 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. All remote and alternative work schedules will be temporarily suspended during the General and Fiscal Legislative sessions of the Arkansas General Assembly. The Secretary’s Office may grant exceptions.

Refer to the [Remote Work Arrangement Policy](#), the [Alternative and Flexible Work Policy](#), and the [SAS Work Schedule Application](#) for more information.

### **3.17 Smoke-Free Workplace**

Smoking is not allowed in SAS buildings or work areas. Smoking includes the use of any tobacco products, electronic smoking devices, e-cigarettes containing nicotine cartridges, and dipping, as well as inhaling, exhaling, burning, vaping, or carrying any lighted tobacco product, including cigarettes, cigars, electronic cigarettes, e-cigarettes, pipe tobacco, and other lighted combustible plant material or derivatives.

Smoking is only permitted during break or meal periods in designated outdoor areas. SAS employees using these areas are expected to dispose of any smoking debris safely and properly. Smoking is prohibited in all vehicles and enclosed areas owned, leased, or operated by SAS.

Smoking is also prohibited by law within 25 feet of an entrance to any building owned or leased by SAS. Employees should consult their supervisor for designated smoking locations.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Drug and Smoke-Free Workplace Policy](#) for more information.

### **3.18 Traveling on behalf of SAS**

SAS employees may be required to travel on official state business. The Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) has established travel regulations addressing meals, lodging, and transportation travel allowances.

In addition to the DFA travel regulations, SAS requires that detailed receipts be submitted along with the TR-1 for all meals and other travel-related expenses.

Employees are to receive approval from their supervisor, director, and the Chief Fiscal Officer before traveling.

Refer to the [DFA Travel Regulations](#) for more information.

### **3.19 Vehicle Safety Program**

SAS participates in the Vehicle Safety Program administered by the Arkansas Insurance Department. This program ensures that employees who drive on official state business are duly licensed per the requirements of all applicable state laws and have an acceptable driving record.

Driving State Vehicles:

- All passengers must wear a seat belt, and state vehicles shall only be used for state business
- All SAS employees operating a state vehicle shall follow the state and local traffic laws
- Any accident or traffic violation that occurs while operating a state vehicle for state business must be reported as soon as possible, but no later than within 24 hours
- Traffic violations may result in the loss or restriction of an employee's authorization to operate state-owned vehicles.

Driving Personal Vehicle on State Business:

- All SAS employees driving a personal vehicle on state business are required to have insurance and shall follow the state and local traffic laws
- Any accident or traffic violation while operating a personal vehicle on state business must be reported as soon as possible, but no later than within 24 hours
- Vehicles may be monitored if telematics is deployed in state-owned vehicles

### **3.20 Virtual/Online Meeting Protocol**

When conducting calls or meetings using web conference platforms, such as Microsoft Teams, employees are expected to present themselves professionally with their camera on. This applies to all meetings whether an employee is on-site or working remotely.

### **3.21 Working Hours and Breaks**

Normal business hours of operation for most SAS employees are from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The normal workday for full-time employees is eight (8) hours. Divisions

or offices operating on a 24-hour basis or other work hours are responsible for setting effective schedules. Normal working hours may be modified as necessary to facilitate efficient business operations. When additional work requirements are necessary, the cooperation of all employees is expected. Work breaks are granted at each supervisor's discretion. Breaks are a privilege and should not interfere with work schedules or deadlines. Personal calls should be limited to breaks, absent an emergency, and kept as brief as possible.

## SECTION 4—LEAVE AND ATTENDANCE POLICIES

The State of Arkansas provides state employees with various types of paid leave. The minimum leave amount an employee can use is 15 minutes, even if the employee is absent for less than 15 minutes.

### 4.1 Annual Leave

Each regular or probationary employee earns annual leave with full pay based on the schedule below for each completed month of service. Employees who work less than full-time per year accrue annual leave in the same proportion as time worked. For example, part-time employees will receive their annual leave in proportion to time worked.

Extra-help employees are not eligible to accrue annual leave.

Years of Service	Accrual Per Month	Amount Per Year
0-3 years	8 hours	12 days per year
4-5 years	10 hours	15 days per year
6-12 years	12 hours	18 days per year
13-20 years	14 hours	21 days per year
20 years	15 hours	22 ½ days per year

Employees must have completed full years of employment before moving to the next higher accrual rate. For example, an employee would not move to the second level of annual leave accrual rate until they had completed three (3) full years of employment and are starting their fourth year.

Annual leave can only be taken with the prior approval of the supervisor. Annual leave is granted based on workdays, not calendar days. Non-workdays, such as holidays and weekends, are not charged as annual leave. Whenever an employee terminates employment, their accumulated annual leave as of their last working day is liquidated in a lump sum payment, not to exceed 30 working days (a combined total of 240 hours including annual, holiday, and birthday leave).

Refer to the [SAS OPM Annual Leave Policy](#) for more information.

### 4.2 Arkansas Public Employees Retirement System Seminar Leave

Employee attendance at Arkansas Public Employees Retirement System (APERS) retirement seminars will be treated as other employee benefits presentations. Those attending must have a minimum of five (5) years of credited service in a state-sponsored service retirement system (vested). Employees can attend a retirement seminar once every five (5) years and within five (5) years of retirement without using accrued leave. Employees within one (1) year of retirement or entering the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) are not required to use accrued leave to attend retirement seminars or scheduled sessions with retirement counselors. Employees must schedule their attendance so that their absence will not hinder the work of SAS. Attending a seminar requires prior approval from the employee's supervisor.

### **4.3 Attendance and Tardiness**

Employees are expected to be at their work area by the start of their workday. Employees should contact their supervisor for information on how to request leave, requirements for reporting tardiness and absences, and other attendance-related issues.

Supervisors should document leave abuse or any unauthorized absence from work, including tardiness past the start of the workday. An example of leave abuse would be calling in absent every Friday (pattern of use) or continually exhausting leave.

### **4.4 Catastrophic Leave Bank**

The catastrophic leave bank program was established to provide paid leave for employees with a catastrophic illness who have exhausted all other paid leave. A catastrophic illness is a medical condition, unplanned or unforeseen, as certified by a physician, that requires an employee's absence from duty for a prolonged period and which, except for the catastrophic leave program, would result in a substantial loss of income to the employee because of the exhaustion of all earned leave. The program includes the medical condition of a spouse, parent, or child of the employee, which requires the employee's absence from duty.

It is important that the employee, or the employee's legal representative, request the catastrophic leave before the employee's leave is exhausted.

Eligible employees may receive up to forty (40) hours of paid bereavement leave each calendar year following the death of an immediate family member.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Catastrophic Leave Policy](#) for more information.

### **4.5 Children's Educational Activities Leave**

SAS employees are entitled to eight (8) hours of Children's Educational Leave (CEAL) in one calendar year to participate in any school-sponsored educational activity regardless of the number of children. This includes engaging in and traveling to or from the educational activities of a child. The children must be enrolled in a pre-kindergarten program through grade 12. Leave unused during a calendar year is not carried forward to the next year, nor is it payable at termination.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Child Educational Activities Leave Policy](#) for more information.

### **4.6 Court and Jury Leave**

An employee serving as a juror or subpoenaed as a witness to give a deposition or testimony in a court or hearing, not involving personal litigation or service as a paid expert witness outside the scope of state employment, is entitled to full compensation in addition to any fees paid for such services. Such services or necessary appearances in any court shall not be counted as annual leave. Employees who work night shifts can take court and jury leave on the night shift of the day on which they served. The employee shall provide the appropriate documentation to the supervisor and the request for leave.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Serving as a Juror or Witness Policy](#) for more information.

#### 4.7 Disaster Service Volunteer Leave

SAS employees who are certified by the American Red Cross may volunteer for disaster service relief within Arkansas and receive up to 15 working days of paid leave if they meet the following conditions:

- The Department Secretary approves the leave
- Their specialized disaster relief services are requested by the American Red Cross for a disaster

The approved leave is without loss of pay, seniority, annual leave, sick leave, compensatory pay, or overtime pay.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Emergency Leave, Disaster Service Volunteer Leave, and Emergency and Rescue Leave Policy](#) for more information.

#### 4.8 Family and Medical Leave Act

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requires all public agencies to provide up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to eligible employees for certain family and medical reasons. To be eligible for FMLA leave, an employee must have worked at least 1,250 hours in the twelve (12) months preceding the commencement of FMLA and meet one (1) of the following qualifying reasons for leave:

- A serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the job
- Any qualifying exigency arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a military member on covered active duty
- The birth or placement of a son or daughter, to bond with a newborn or newly placed son or daughter, or to care for a son or daughter with a serious health condition
- The care of the employee's spouse, son or daughter, or parent with a serious health condition
- To care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness if the employee is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of the service member (military caregiver leave)

In the case of birth or adoption, eligibility for FMLA leave shall expire at the end of the twelve (12) months beginning on the date of a child's birth or placement.

The twelve (12) month period used by the State of Arkansas is on a calendar year basis.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Family and Medical Leave Act Policy](#) for more information.

#### 4.9 Leave Accruals

Leave accrued during a calendar month is not earned by an active employee until the last working day of the month. Leave is available for the employee to use beginning the first day of the month following when the leave was earned. Leave must be earned before it can be used. Employees earn annual and sick leave at the standard accrual rate when on paid leave. An employee may not earn leave when in a leave without pay (LWOP) status for ten (10) or more cumulative days (80 hours) within a calendar month. This includes annual, sick, holiday, and

birthday leave. The annual leave lost due to the LWOP is based on the accrual rate authorized for that employee.

#### **4.10 Leave Without Pay**

An employee who has exhausted all accrued leave, and must be off work, may request to receive LWOP. LWOP should only be requested in rare circumstances, and requests should be submitted in advance of the leave or as soon as practicable. The SAS Secretary must approve all requests for LWOP. Employees must exhaust all accrued sick, annual, holiday, and birthday leave before using LWOP for an illness. An employee on unapproved LWOP may be subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

Employees may take LWOP without exhausting accrued annual, holiday, and birthday leave in the following circumstances: maternity leave, military leave, disciplinary leave, inclement weather, or due to necessary budget reductions as determined by the SAS Secretary.

An employee on LWOP for ten (10) or more days in the calendar month shall not accumulate leave time. An employee may continue to participate in agency group insurance programs to which the state contributes. The employee would be responsible for paying the total cost directly to EBD. SAS will pay the employer's matching portion of LWOP covered under FMLA, Military Leave, or Workers' Compensation.

#### **4.11 Maternity Leave**

An eligible employee may request catastrophic leave to receive up to twelve (12) consecutive weeks of paid maternity leave. If an employee is eligible for both catastrophic leave for maternity purposes and FMLA, the two will run concurrently.

An employee who is ineligible for catastrophic maternity leave may request to use accrued sick or annual leave for maternity leave but is not required to exhaust all accrued leave before using LWOP for maternity purposes.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Catastrophic Leave Policy](#) for more information.

#### **4.12 Military Leave**

Military leave may only be used by active members of the United States Armed Forces, which include: the United States Marine Corps, United States Army, United States Navy, United States Air Force, Arkansas National Guard, and all reserve branches of the armed forces. There are different types of military leave available to eligible employees. 1) Employees called to active duty are placed on extended military leave without pay. 2) Employees called to active duty in an emergency as declared by the President or Governor are granted leave with pay for up to 30 working days. 3) Employees who participate in a military training program made available by the National Guard or any of the reserve branches of the armed forces or the United States Public Health Service are entitled to fifteen (15) days of paid leave, including necessary travel time. 4) Employees who incurred a military service-connected disability as rated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs are granted leave with pay up to six (6) days to be examined or treated for the disability.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Military Leave Policy](#) for more information.

#### **4.13 Organ Donor & Bone Marrow Donor Leave**

SAS employees are entitled to paid leave up to 30 days per calendar year to serve as an organ donor. In addition, SAS employees are entitled to paid leave for up to seven (7) days per calendar year to serve as a bone marrow donor. To qualify for organ donor or bone marrow donor leave, employees must request the leave in writing and provide written verification from the medical physician that will perform the transplantation. Following the transplantation, written verification must be provided by the same physician.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Bone Marrow or Organ Donation Leave Policy](#) for more information.

#### **4.14 Right to Vote**

Division directors and supervisors shall schedule employees' work hours on election days so that each employee has an opportunity to exercise the right to vote while still completing their normal workday.

#### **4.15 Sick Leave**

Regular, full-time employees will accrue eight (8) hours of sick leave per month. Employees working less than full-time will accrue sick leave in the same proportion as the time worked. Sick leave may only be used for the following purposes:

- Death or severe illness of an immediate family member. Immediate family is defined as the father, mother, sister, brother, spouse, child, grandparents, grandchild, in-laws, or any individual acting as a parent or guardian of an individual
- When the employee cannot work because of sickness or injury; or for medical, dental, or optical treatment

Sick leave should be requested in advance; however, if the illness makes advance notice impossible, an employee must notify their supervisor before starting the workday on the first day of absence. A request for sick leave must be submitted within two (2) days after returning to work.

An SAS employee on sick leave for five (5) or more consecutive days must provide a certificate of illness from an attending physician. SAS may require a doctor's note for any suspected abuse of sick leave or any pattern of sick leave usage.

Employees are not entitled to payment for accrued and unused sick leave when they terminate their employment. An employee who is terminated due to a reduction in force will have all accrued sick leave restored if the employee returns to state employment within six (6) months of termination.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Sick Leave Policy](#) for more information.

#### **4.16 Sick Leave Incentive Payout Program**

A lump sum payment for unused sick leave will be issued upon an employee's retirement or death. The employee must be immediately eligible and have applied to receive retirement benefits from a state-sponsored retirement system.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Leave Transfer and Leave Payout Policy](#) for more information.

#### 4.17 State Holidays

The following are the official holidays applicable to state employees:

Holiday	Observed
New Year's Day	January 1
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday	3rd Monday in January
George Washington's Birthday & Daisy Gatson Bates Day	3rd Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	1st Monday in September
Veterans Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	4th Thursday in November
Christmas Eve	December 24
Christmas Day	December 25

To be eligible for holiday pay, the employee must be in pay status at least 15 minutes the last scheduled workday before the holiday and at least 15 minutes the first scheduled workday after the holiday. When a holiday occurs while an employee is on annual or sick leave, that day is charged as a holiday and will not be charged against the employee's accrued leave.

The following provisions apply to employees who cannot take holidays as scheduled:

- Employees must work on holidays when the needs of the department require it. Each division director will determine the need. Employees who work on a holiday will accrue the holiday leave and may use the leave later
- When a holiday occurs on Saturday, the holiday will be observed on the preceding Friday. Holidays falling on a Sunday will be observed on the following Monday

The Governor, by executive proclamation, may proclaim additional days when state offices shall be closed in observance of special events or for other reasons at her discretion.

Birthday leave is earned on the employee's birthday. Holiday and birthday leave never expire and are carried forward each year. When an employee terminates employment, holiday and birthday leave are included with unused annual leave and paid out as a lump sum not to exceed 240 hours.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Holidays and Birthday Policy](#) for more information.

#### **4.18 Transfer of Leave**

Employees transferring between departments without a break in service will retain all accumulated annual, holiday, and sick leave upon transfer to their new department.

#### **4.19 Year-End Balance**

A set amount of accrued unused leave will carry to the following calendar year. Accrued leave may exceed the year-end carry forward balance limits during the calendar year, but the hours above these limits will be forfeited if not used by December 31 of each year and will be donated to the Catastrophic Leave Bank unless the employee requests otherwise.

- Maximum annual leave that is carried forward is 240 hours (30 days)
- Maximum sick leave that is carried forward is 960 hours (120 days)

## **SECTION 5—EMPLOYEE BENEFITS**

### **5.1 Health and Life Insurance**

Group health insurance and group life insurance benefits are available and offered to employees through Employee Benefits Division (EBD). Depending on an employee insurance option, a portion of the coverage will be paid by the employer. Visit the [ARBenefits](#) website or call the customer service number at (501) 682-9656, or toll-free at (877) 815-1017.

### **5.2 Healthcare Flexible Spending Account**

A Healthcare Flexible Spending Account (FSA) is a pre-tax benefit account that an employee can use to pay for eligible medical, dental, and vision care expenses that aren't covered by the employee's health insurance plan. The employee decides how much to contribute to their healthcare FSA each year, and funds are withdrawn automatically from each paycheck for deposit into the employee's account before taxes are deducted. The total amount an employee elects to contribute to their healthcare FSA each year is available on the first day of the plan year.

Employees need to spend the funds in their healthcare FSA within the plan year. However, the plan may allow employees to three (3) months after the end of the plan year to spend funds left in their account.

### **5.3 Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account**

A Dependent Care Flexible Spending Account (Dependent Care FSA) is a pre-tax benefit account used to pay for dependent care services while an employee is at work. The money an employee contributes to a Dependent Care FSA is not subject to payroll taxes, so the employee may pay less in taxes and take home more of their paycheck. Under this type of account, a "dependent" is a child under 13 years of age (until the day of their 13th birthday) and adult dependents who can't take care of themselves. The dependent must live with the employee and be claimed as a dependent on the employee's tax return. Each year, employees should review the eligible expense list on the vendor's website to see what is covered under the Dependent Care FSA.

### **5.4 Health Savings Account**

A Health Savings Account (HSA) is a pre-tax benefit account, in conjunction with an employee's qualified high-deductible health plan, and is used to pay for eligible out-of-pocket medical, vision, and dental expenses. Employees can earn interest on the money in their account and invest it to grow over time. With an HSA, funds must be accrued before they are available. The money in an HSA account may be redeemed by an employee if they leave SAS or if the employee has money left over at the end of the plan year.

### **5.5 Retirement**

The Arkansas Public Employees' Retirement System (APERS) is a multi-employer defined benefit plan, qualified under Section 401(a) of the Internal Revenue Code, with defined contribution options. Participating employers contribute to a rate established annually by the APERS board of trustees. APERS monies are invested to pay future benefits to members, beneficiaries, and survivors. Nothing in this description shall override any law or rule regarding APERS or applicable law, regulation, or rule.

Employees hired on or after July 1, 2005, are required to contribute 5.5% of their pre-taxed earnings to APERS. This percentage will increase by .25% annually until it reaches 7%, per Act 365 of 2021. In other words, employees must pay a portion of their salary (pre-tax) into APERS to earn service credit towards a future retirement benefit. The contributions are deducted from the

employee's salary to pay for retirement. These contributions will remain on deposit in the employee's name unless the employee leaves the job and receives a refund of their contributions. Employees become vested under the APERS after completing five (5) years of service. Death-in-service benefits may be payable to a vested employee's survivors if the death occurs while the employee is in active service. This benefit is also payable to employees who have applied for retirement benefits but die before the effective date of the benefits. Actual service is credited at the rate of one (1) month for each month of service.

Questions regarding specific employee issues should be addressed to APERS at (501) 682-7800 or 1-800-682-7377 for those residing outside the Little Rock area.

Refer to the [APERS](#) website for more information.

### **5.6 Deferred Retirement Option Plan**

The Arkansas General Assembly established a Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) for state employees, allowing employees who have at least 28 years of credit with APERS to continue working for the state under the DROP. Any time purchased by an APERS member counts toward the 28-year requirement. Employees may participate in the DROP for up to ten (10) years. At the conclusion of the DROP period, employees must separate from state employment and begin receiving their retirement benefits. The accumulated DROP balance may be paid as a lump sum, in monthly installments, or rolled over into an independent retirement account. Employees participating in the DROP are still eligible for deferred compensation, career service recognition payments, sick and annual leave, and state employees' health insurance.

### **5.7 Deferred Compensation Benefits**

New employees will be automatically enrolled in the Arkansas Diamond Deferred Compensation Plan (457 Plan), with a 3% automatic deduction. If an employee does not wish to participate, they have 90 days from their first deduction to opt-out. If an employee chooses not to complete the opt-out form on their first day of employment, they may opt out of the plan by logging into the Arkansas Diamond Deferred Compensation Plan website at [Voya](#) or by calling 1-800-905-1833.

At any time, an employee may elect to participate in the Arkansas Diamond plan. The tax-sheltered investment options offer setting aside money for future use. This deferred income can serve as a supplement to social security, pension, or retirement benefits. For a local one-on-one consultative meeting, please call to schedule an appointment at 1-866-271-3327.

### **5.8 Arkansas State Employees Benefit Advisors**

Arkansas State Employees Benefit Advisors (ARSEBA) is the exclusive voluntary benefits provider for state employees. For more information, visit the [ARSEBA](#) website. ARSEBA provides a comprehensive menu of benefits which includes:

- Accident Insurance
- Cancer Insurance
- Critical Care Insurance
- Dental and Vision Insurance
- Hospital Indemnity Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Long & Short-Term Disability

### **5.9 Arkansas State Employee Association**

Arkansas State Employee Association (ASEA) is a non-partisan, non-profit, non-union, membership-driven association that advocates for Arkansas State employees and offers exclusive benefits to its members. Employees of the State of Arkansas who choose to join the association will have the dues deducted from payroll or paid annually. For more information, call 1-800-950-8139.

### **5.10 Employee Assistance Program**

SAS employees are eligible for up to three (3) free sessions with the State of Arkansas Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAP offers counseling for family matters, stress, relationships, grief and loss, and substance abuse. EAP can assist with finding childcare, elder care, moving and relocation services, schools and colleges, home repairs, financial counseling, legal assistance, car purchases, or home purchases. All EAP visits are confidential per issue. EAP is available for almost any area of an employee's life. Employees can reach EAP at 1-800-624-5544 or learn more by visiting the [ARBenefits](#) website.

### **5.11 Arkansas Achieving Better Life Experience Plan**

The Arkansas Achieving Better Life Experience Plan (AR ABLE) is a tax-advantaged savings program for individuals with disabilities. It enables these individuals to save funds without risking eligibility for certain means tested benefits. The program allows participants to save money for qualified disability related expenses, including education, housing, transportation, and more. Contributions to the AR ABLE Plan grow tax-free, offering a valuable resource for individuals with disabilities and their families to plan for future expenses.

### **5.12 Arkansas Brighter Future 529 Plan**

An Arkansas Brighter Future 529 Plan is a tax-advantaged savings plan designed to help families save for education expenses. Contributions to the Arkansas Brighter Future Plan are made with after tax dollars, but earnings grow tax free, and withdrawals used for qualified educational or education-related expenses are also tax free. These expenses can include tuition, books, room and board, and other qualified educational costs at eligible institutions. You may be eligible to deduct up to \$5,000 (up to \$10,000 for married couples making a proper election) from their Arkansas adjusted gross income calculation on their Arkansas state income taxes.

### **5.13 Workers Compensation**

Workers Compensation is a benefit provided to injured workers or their dependents in the event of the worker's death. After approval by the Workers' Compensation Commission, compensation is provided when an employee cannot work because of a job-related disability. Please contact the SAS Human Resources Administrator to coordinate all claims.

Refer to the [SAS OPM Workers' Compensation Policy](#) for more information.



## SAS Employee Handbook Acknowledgement Receipt

The SAS Employee Handbook (handbook) contains important information about the Department of Shared Administrative Services (SAS) and its divisions. This establishes the personnel policies, procedures, benefits, and standards of conduct that govern employment with SAS; however, it is not all-inclusive. In the event of a conflict between a provision of this handbook and applicable law or SAS-approved policy, the provisions of that law or policy shall govern.

I understand that Arkansas is an “employment at will” state, and an employee may be terminated for any reason or no reason at all, so long as the termination is not for an illegal reason. Nothing in this handbook or any other document, policy, or procedure used by SAS shall be held or construed to create a promise of employment, a promise of future benefits, or a binding contract between SAS and its employees, retirees, or their dependents, for benefits or any other purpose. All persons employed by SAS are hired, evaluated, disciplined, discharged, or any combination thereof per the laws and policies governing employment with the State of Arkansas and its departments.

I acknowledge that I know where to find the electronic copy of the SAS Employee Handbook and SAS policies. They are located at <https://arkdhs.sharepoint.com/sites/SAS-es>. I understand that I am expected to read the handbook in its entirety and consult with my supervisor or the SAS Chief General Counsel regarding any questions about the information. This handbook may be altered, modified, or rescinded, and the SAS Secretary may issue a revised copy, new policies, or both, at any time. As this handbook or policies are written, changed, or updated, they take precedence over any conflicting information found. Employees are responsible for consulting SAS policies as needed.

I accept the terms and understand that it is my responsibility to comply with the policies contained in this handbook and any revisions made to it. I understand that I may be subject to disciplinary action, including immediate termination, for violating any provision of this handbook or SAS policy.

I will sign this Acknowledgment of Receipt and return it to the SAS Human Resources Administrator within ten (10) business days of receipt of this Handbook. I understand that this form will be retained in my personnel file.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_