Office of Human Resources

1201 Conduct Standards and Ethics in Government

2026-11-04

Table of Contents

Section A: General Provisions . . . 1
Section B: Conflict of Interest . . . 2
Section C: Privileged or Confidential Information Usage . . . 4
Section D: Disclosure of Information . . . 4
Section E: Outside Activities and Relationships . . . 5
Section F: Employment Conditions . . . 6
Section G: Activities and Conduct During Working Hours . . . 7
Section H: Weapons Policy . . . 9
Section I: State Property Usage . . . 11
Section J: Dress Code . . . 12
1201 A1 Individual Conflict of Interest Attestation . . . 12
1201 A2 Code of Ethics for Government Service . . . 13
1201 A3 Governor’s Executive Order . . . 13
1201 A4 Outside Organization Expense Reimbursement Request . . . 13
1201 A5 Dress Code Guidelines . . . 14
Section A: Attire Examples . . . 14
Section B: Grooming and Personal Hygiene . . . 16
Section C: Policy Adherence . . . 16
1201 A6 Dress Code Frequently Asked Questions . . . 17

Georgia Department of Human Services
Human Resources Policy #1201

Conduct Standards and Ethics in Government

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References:
O.C.G.A. § 45-2-1 et. seq. — Eligibility and Qualifications for Office
O.C.G.A. § 45-10-1 — Code of Ethics in Government Service
O.C.G.A. § 45-10-20 et. seq. — Conflicts of Interest
O.C.G.A. § 45-10-40 — Codes of Ethics and Conflicts of Interest
O.C.G.A. § 16-11-125.1 et. seq. — Carrying and Possession of Firearms
45 C.F.R. § 1321.47 — Conflicts of Interest Policies and Procedures for State Agencies
Executive Order (Code of Ethics) issued by Governor Brian P. Kemp — April 1, 2021

Department of Human Services (DHS) employees are expected to maintain and exercise at all times the highest moral and ethical standards in carrying out their responsibilities and functions. Employees must conduct themselves in a manner that prevents all forms of impropriety, placement of self-interest above public interest, partiality, prejudice, threats, favoritism, and undue influence.

Employees must be alert in conducting business with employees and non-employees to avoid even the appearance of misconduct, conflict of interest, personal or financial gain. All employees must review and complete **DHS Policy #1201 A1: Individual Conflict of Interest Attestation**. While performing departmental duties, employees are required to comply with **DHS Policy #1201 A2: Federal and State laws, the Code of Ethics for Government Service**, **DHS Policy #1201 A3: the Governor's Executive Order, dated April 1, 2021**, Rules of the State Personnel Board and all DHS, Division, and Administrative Offices policies. Additionally, In accordance with the Governor's Executive Order, also attached to this policy is **DHS Policy #1201 A4: Outside Organization Expense Reimbursement Request**.

DHS employees are required to report all suspected violations of Federal or State law involving DHS employees, or anyone contracted to provide services to DHS. Reports should be made to the DHS Office of Inspector General (OIG) immediately upon the employee becoming aware of a suspected violation. DHS employees receiving a complaint of criminal misconduct, fraud, or abuse, whether by written or verbal communication will, as soon as practicable, report the complaint to the OIG.

Section A: General Provisions

1. Written guidelines that address every type of employee conduct are not possible. This policy provides general guidance and examples, which establishes a framework of principles to assist employees in performing their jobs in a professional manner.
2. The General Counsel in the Office of General Counsel (OGC) is DHS' designated Ethics Officer. The Ethics Officer shall take appropriate measures to ensure that all employees become familiar

with applicable ethics laws and policies.

3. In general, DHS is not concerned as an employer with non-work time of employees. A DHS employee's off-duty conduct becomes of concern when it affects departmental operations or reflects discredit upon the agency. Such off-duty conduct may result in appropriate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment. Publishing or posting inappropriate, offensive, confidential or sensitive work-related information or material regarding clients, colleagues, supervisors or other work-related contacts on the internet or any social network site (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, blog) or other website without authorization is prohibited and an example of off-duty activity that could reflect discredit upon DHS.
4. Employees are also prohibited from publishing or posting Federal Tax Information (FTI) to the internet or social media.
5. Employees shall afford all constituents fair and equal opportunity to express their concerns and ideas regarding state programs and policies without regard to their political affiliation, sophistication, or influence. Recommendations and decisions made by employees in the performance of their duties shall be made without bias.
6. Employees shall not advocate for or cause the advancement, appointment, employment, promotion, or transfer, of a relative to an office or position with an agency or with the Office of the Governor.
7. Employees shall not participate in an action relating to the disciplining of a relative.
8. Employees shall continually monitor, evaluate, and manage their personal, financial, and professional affairs to ensure the absence of a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict.
9. An employee's failure to comply with any directives regarding mandatory training may result in formal disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.
10. DHS reserves the right to take appropriate disciplinary action, to decline to appoint or promote an applicant/employee, or to reassign an employee in order to avoid or eliminate the appearance of conflict of interest based on a coworker, employee, client, customer or other relationship.

Section B: Conflict of Interest

1. A conflict of interest may exist where employees engage in activities, which may financially or otherwise enhance themselves, their relatives, or individuals with whom they are personally or financially involved as a result of knowledge, information or action taken in an official capacity as a DHS employee. All employees have a duty of trust to the State and its citizens, and no one is permitted to make an improper profit from the exercise of duties and responsibilities.
    a. A conflict of interest may exist where no actual profit is made by the employee. The opportunity for profit or benefit alone may create a conflict.
    b. No promise of restraint or waiver by the affected employee will be sufficient to avoid a conflict or the appearance of a conflict.
    c. A conflict of interest may arise from a circumstance or situation, and not an activity. The elements of a circumstance or situation may appear as the opportunity for enhancement by a transaction or opportunity to influence that transaction as an employee.

2. A conflict of interest may also arise when an employee engages in an outside activity, while not necessarily incompatible or inconsistent with official duties, the outside activity becomes so extensive that it interferes with the proper and full-time performance of the employee's official departmental duties. Decisions regarding the existence of a conflict and its remedy are to be made by an authorized DHS official. Please also refer to DHS Policy #1203: Secondary Employment.
3. No DHS employee may supervise or be supervised by a relative, either directly or indirectly. DHS prohibits appointing relatives or household members to roles where a supervisory relationship could exist or a conflict of interest might arise.
4. Employees are not permitted to influence or participate in decisions—formal or informal—related to a relative's or household member's employment, including hiring, promotions, evaluations, or disciplinary actions.
5. Supervisors and managers are prohibited from engaging in consensual close personal relationships with any employee who reports to them directly or indirectly.

> **NOTE** Please refer to DHS Policy #1204: Employment Status of Relatives for guidance regarding relatives, supervision, and conflict of interest.

6. Employees are to make every effort to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest.
    a. An appearance of conflict exists when a reasonable person would conclude from the circumstances that the employee's ability to protect the public interest, or perform public duties, is compromised by personal interests.
    b. An appearance of conflict could exist even in the absence of a true conflict of interest (e.g. favoritism, personal relationships, use of company resources).

> **NOTE** Upon hire and annually thereafter, All DHS employees must complete DHS Policy #1201 A1: Individual Conflict of Interest Attestation.

7. Employees shall disqualify themselves from participation in any official proceeding which might reasonably be questioned due to an employee's personal or financial relationships with participants in the proceeding.
    a. A "participant" includes, but is not limited to, an owner, shareholder, partner, employee, or agent of a business entity involved in the proceeding. If an employee is uncertain whether the relationship justifies disqualification, then the employee shall disclose the relationship to the person presiding over the proceeding.
    b. The presiding officer shall determine the extent to which, if any, the employee will be permitted to participate. If the affected employee is the person presiding, then the vice chair or such other substitute presiding officer shall make the determination.
8. Employees shall not directly or indirectly ask, accept, demand, solicit, seek, receive financial or other benefits for themselves or for others in return for being influenced in the discharge of their official responsibilities.

Section C: Privileged or Confidential Information Usage

1. Many employees are exposed to privileged or confidential information through their knowledge of official plans and programs which may be of significant interest to the public.
2. Employees shall not knowingly use their positions in any manner which will result in financial or other benefit, directly or indirectly for themselves, their relatives, or individuals with whom they are personally or financially involved.
3. Privileged or confidential information (e.g., contract bids, certain financial, personnel or client information) is to be released only by authorized DHS officials.
4. The release of any privileged or confidential information, financial or otherwise, is not authorized to any person who does not have a legitimate need-to-know.
    a. Employees shall not disclose information gained in the course of, or by reason of, their official responsibilities in a way that would affect a personal financial interest for themselves, their relatives, or individuals with whom they are personally or financially involved.
    b. Use of computers to obtain information concerning clients, patients, customers, other employees or third parties for non-work-related reasons is prohibited.
5. DHS is a "covered entity" under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), which provides for the safeguarding of each individual’s personal health information. In response to HIPAA, the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued a "Privacy Rule" effective April 14, 2003.
    a. In accordance with the Privacy Rule and DHS’s Privacy Policies and Procedures, employees shall receive training on DHS Policies and Procedures relating to HIPAA’s privacy requirements. The level of training individual employees receive will vary, depending on the individual’s job responsibilities and their access to and involvement with personal health information.
    b. As a part of HIPPA training, all DHS employees shall read and sign the Important Information on DHS HIPAA Privacy Policies and Procedures form, which will be maintained by the Office of Training and Professional Development.
    c. Employees shall be responsible for obtaining and maintaining the appropriate level of awareness and compliance with DHS' Privacy Policies and Procedures. In addition to penalties prescribed by federal law, Privacy Policy violations may result in corrective or disciplinary action.
6. Employees are prohibited from posting, publishing, or discussing any form of confidential or sensitive work-related information on an internet blog or other website without proper authorization.

Section D: Disclosure of Information

1. All applicants/employees are required to disclose felony convictions on applications for employment and convictions and/or pending charges on the State Security Questionnaire/Loyalty Oath Form.

a. Falsification or misrepresentation of information, including criminal history, is prohibited and may result in an offer of employment being withdrawn from an applicant or employee dismissal.

b. Material falsification or misrepresentation of any information, including criminal history, will result in an offer of employment being withdrawn from an applicant or employee dismissal.

> **NOTE** "Material" refers to information which directly influences and/or impacts the hiring decision based on records, credentials and/or qualifications.

c. Applicants whose offer of employment is withdrawn or employees who are dismissed due to falsification or misrepresentation of information are not eligible for consideration for re-employment with DHS for a minimum of six (6) months from the date of withdrawal or dismissal, whichever is applicable.

2. Employees are required to notify their supervisor and their designated Human Resources Representative of any arrests and/or convictions within five (5) calendar days of the date of arrest or conviction. A determination of appropriate action will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Section E: Outside Activities and Relationships

1. Employees must be alert in conducting business with non-employees to avoid even the appearance of misconduct, personal or financial gain or conflict of interest.
2. Employees must report ownership or partial ownership of a company if the company in which the employee is part owner is doing business, or seeks a business relationship with DHS, including any entity within DHS.
3. Employees are prohibited from serving for compensation as a corporate officer or director of any for-profit or publicly held company. Voluntary pro bono services on behalf of non-profit organizations may be permitted, so long as services to such organizations would not have the potential to create a conflict and do not impair the employee's ability to discharge his or her public duties fully, faithfully, and impartially.
4. The DHS Commissioner may not have any ongoing dual employment.
5. Employees are prohibited from membership on the Board of Directors of any organization with which DHS contracts.
6. Employees are prohibited from accepting personal favors or benefits under circumstances which may influence or give the appearance of influencing their official activities. Such favors and benefits may not be accepted by employees on behalf of other individuals.
7. Employees are prohibited from involvement in official activities in which a client or customer is a relative or in-law. Employees are prohibited from involvement in official activities in which a client, patients or patient or customer is a personal acquaintance, when the relationship creates a conflict or perceived conflict of interest.

a. Employees are required to report such circumstances to their supervisors to avoid the

appearance of giving unjustified preference or a conflict of interest.

b. Employees are encouraged to discuss the above circumstances with their supervisors, if there are any questions concerning relatives, in-laws, or personal acquaintances.

8. Employees must conduct themselves in a positive and courteous manner at all times towards clients, patients or customers. Mistreatment of clients, patients or customers in any form is a matter of concern at all supervisory levels and will not be tolerated. Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to:

   a. Obtaining alcohol or illegal drugs for or from clients, patients or customers.

   b. Except as provided in paragraphs c and d below, accepting, directly or indirectly, any gift from any person (e.g., lobbyist and state vendor) with whom an employee may interact on official state business. Such gifts must be returned to the donor or transferred to a charitable organization. In addition, the DHS Ethics Officer must be notified of the incident.

   c. An employee may accept a gift on behalf of DHS where appropriate for purposes of tradition, ceremony, or intergovernmental relations, or when acting as a DHS representative. If a gift retains value after its acceptance, the employee must: (a) maintain custody of the gift no longer than reasonably necessary to arrange for the transfer of custody of the gift to DHS, or to a charitable organization on behalf of DHS; (b) file a report with the designated Ethics Officer no later than 30 days after receipt of the gift. The report must contain a description of the gift, the approximate monetary value thereof, the name and address of the person making the gift, the date the gift was made, and the disposition of the gift.

      I. "Gift" means anything of value exceeding $75, including lodging, transportation, personal services, gratuities, subscriptions, memberships, trips, loans, extensions of credit, forgiveness of debts, advances, deposits of money, or anything that retains value after acceptance.

   d. Items of minimal cost received by employees are not considered gifts. Such items include, but are not limited to pencils, pens, or coffee mugs received while attending a conference.

   e. Accepting any honoraria whatsoever.

   f. Gambling, buying, selling, trading, borrowing, lending goods or money with clients, patients or customers.

   g. Using relationships with or clinical information obtained on current or former clients, patients or customers to take unfair advantage of them, their relatives, friends, or personal acquaintances.

   h. Engaging in sexual relationships, whether physical or verbal, with clients or customers, or otherwise taking sexual advantage of them; and,

   i. Engaging in rude, argumentative, hostile, or otherwise unprofessional behavior toward clients, patients or customers.

Section F: Employment Conditions

1. Employees must comply with the conditions of employment specified in laws, rules, policies, Code of Ethics and the Governor’s Executive Order referenced previously. Examples include, but are not limited to:

a. Dressing appropriately and presenting a neat and clean appearance, as outlined in Section J of this policy.

b. Maintaining professional relationships with coworkers and supervisors.

c. Maintaining a courteous and professional demeanor, in the presence of clients, the general public, and other employees.

d. Giving clear and accurate information in a professional manner, whether using the telephone or in person.

e. Reporting for work on time.

f. Following the appropriate call-in procedures for late arrival and/or absence.

g. Following the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

h. Following policies on break and meal periods.

i. Using work time for work-related activity.

j. Using leave appropriately, including submitting timely requests and providing documentation for use of leave, when required.

k. Following established policies on health, safety, security and sanitation. Notifying supervisors of circumstances or situations that present potential health hazards.

l. Complying with instructions from all supervisors and managers.

Section G: Activities and Conduct During Working Hours

1. Employees are expected to maintain a professional relationship with fellow employees. DHS will not tolerate acts or threatened acts of violence in the workplace. Reports of threats or acts of violence will be thoroughly reviewed, and appropriate action will be taken. Prohibited behaviors include, but are not limited to:

    a. Fighting, threatening or abusive behavior, profane language or written material;

    b. Argumentative behavior, whether directed toward a supervisor, client, customer, coworker, or any other party, while on duty or while acting in an official capacity;

    c. Unprofessional behavior such as sexually related conversations, inappropriate touching of another employee (e.g. kissing, hugging, massaging, sitting on laps), ethnic slurs, racial or other derogatory jokes or remarks and other verbal or physical conduct of an offensive nature; and,

    d. Intimate relationships between supervisors and their subordinate staff members, through any line of authority, based on the significant potential for such relationships to present an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Employees who enter into such relationships are expected to notify higher management of the need for one or both of the employees in the relationship to be reassigned, so that a line relationship no longer exists between the employees.

        I. Intimate relationships between coworkers are prohibited when the relationship has demonstrated a negative impact on the performance of either coworker or the effective,

efficient functioning of the work unit.

2. DHS employees are required to cooperate fully and truthfully and aid with any type of investigation regarding alleged criminal or administrative misconduct or other personnel issues. This includes, but is not limited to, activities such as cooperating fully and truthfully in interviews, answering any and all questions related to the performance of official duties, producing requested documents or objects, participating in polygraph and/or voice stress analysis examinations. Nevertheless, whenever a DHS employee is interviewed by an agent or representative of the DHS OIG concerning an allegation or allegations of criminal misconduct, such DHS employee may not be disciplined or subject to an adverse personnel action for failure to answer questions or provide information concerning possible criminal conduct unless the employee has been provided the appropriate Garrity warning.
3. Employees are not to engage in activities other than official business during working hours. Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to:
    a. Gambling, lending or borrowing money (occasional voluntary loans of nominal value may be acceptable),
    b. Conducting an outside business while on duty by any means of communication, such as operating copier machines, computers, telephones, etc.,
    c. Being on call for secondary employment,
    d. Soliciting, selling products, or fundraising on the work premises for personal profit or for an organization unless specifically authorized (e.g. the State Charitable Contributions Program, personal events such as retirements); and,
    e. Distributing advertisements, pamphlets, or similar literature or soliciting memberships. Training where products or services are sold is strongly discouraged.
4. Employees are not authorized to record conversations at work unless work-related and specifically approved by the organizational unit supervisor.
    a. Supervisors are not to record conversations, meetings, etc., unless there is a specific work-related reason for doing so.
    b. Supervisors should consult with the Office of Human Resources (OHR) prior to recording or authorizing the recording of conversations.
    c. Certain individuals, such as DHS investigators, are authorized to record conversations due to the nature of their job and when necessary and appropriate.
    d. DHS Grievance Hearings may be recorded only by the authorized official(s) conducting the hearing.
5. Employees are prohibited from falsifying records (e.g. timesheets, sign-in/out sheets, case management and/or client, or customer records) or any other documents prepared during the course of business.
6. Employees are prohibited from carrying weapons into DHS facilities and Conventional Worksites as outlined below in Section H.
7. Possession or consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs; and/or reporting to work or being on duty with the presence of drugs or alcohol is prohibited.
8. In order to minimize interference with normal operations and to avoid potential hazards and

liability for DHS visitors (e.g. children, other relatives, friends, or acquaintances of employees) in the workplace during work hours are discouraged. Babysitting children and/or caregiving by employees while on duty is prohibited. Work units may establish specific prohibitions in accordance with work-related needs.

9. Offices, workstations, and office furniture are State property and are reserved for work-related activities. If approved, employees may have personal items in the office or workstation, if suitable for the work area and reasonable.
    a. Examples include family photographs, certificates, diplomas, and small, discreet, decorative, or inspirational items intended for the comfort and enjoyment of the employee.
    b. Such items must not be offensive or inflammatory, or otherwise inconsistent with the DHS work setting.
    c. Employees may be required to remove an item from a work area at any time if it is determined to be inappropriate.

Section H: Weapons Policy

1. The terms and phrases in this policy, unless the context otherwise requires shall mean the following:
    a. "Weapon" is defined in O.C.G.A § 16-11-125.1.
    b. "Lawful Weapons Carrier" is defined as a person who is not prohibited by law from possessing a weapon as defined in O.C.G.A. § 16-11-125.1(2.1).
2. **DHS Strictly Prohibits the Following:**
    a. Possession of a weapon at any time by a DHS employee while conducting DHS business at a DHS facility or Conventional Worksite; or
    b. Possession of a weapon by any DHS employee at any DHS facility or Conventional Worksite when entry into the building is restricted;
    c. Possession of weapon at any facility where the employee is conducting business for DHS purposes (e.g., hotels, convention centers, schools);
    d. Transporting weapons and ammunition in state-issued vehicles.

    Exceptions. This policy does not apply to employees authorized to carry weapons as part of their employment, security personnel engaged in official duty, or persons authorized to carry weapons by federal or state law, regulation or order.

3. **Possession and Storage of a Weapon in a Privately-Owned Vehicle**
    a. DHS may not restrict an employee, while conducting DHS business, from carrying or storing a lawfully possessed weapon in his or her privately-owned motor vehicle if the weapon is in a locked compartment, firearms rack, or container in the motor vehicle.

> **NOTE** State employees are not covered by the Department of Administrative Services' Liability Auto Insurance while engaging in unauthorized use of state or per-

sonal vehicles while conducting DHS business.

4. **Search of DHS Facilities and Property.**
    a. Following a report that a weapon carried by an employee has been observed on DHS premises, Conventional Worksites or any facility where the employee is conducting business for DHS purposes (e.g., hotels, convention centers, schools). DHS reserves the right to search for the purpose of determining whether a weapon is being, or has been, brought onto the premises in violation of this policy. The areas to be searched may include, but are not limited to offices, cubicles, desks, lockers, drawers, and state-owned vehicles. Please refer to Section A of DHS Policy #110: Preventing Workplace Violence for more information.
5. **Reporting Violations of DHS Weapons Policy**
    a. Any DHS employee who has knowledge that a weapon is inside a DHS facility or Conventional Worksite in violation of this policy shall immediately notify a supervisor/highest ranking manager or other authorized official of the presence of the unauthorized weapon. The notice shall include, at a minimum, the following information:
        I. The name of the person suspected of violating the policy, if known, and a description of such person if necessary for identification;
        II. The time and location of the violation;
        III. Any other information which might be pertinent to the matter.
    b. The supervisor/highest ranking manager or authorized official is responsible for escalating the notice of a DHS employee weapons policy violation in accordance with established office procedures and DHS Policies 110 Preventing Workplace Violence and 1953 Workplace Violence - External Threats.
6. **Violation of DHS Weapons Policy**
    a. A DHS employee who violates this policy may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal of employment and possible referral for criminal prosecution.
    b. A DHS employee who violates this policy may be removed from the DHS facility or Conventional Worksite by security personnel and/or reported to the appropriate law enforcement officials.
7. **Signage**
    a. DHS-approved signage consistent with these weapons policy provisions shall be conspicuously posted at all DHS offices and shall not be removed by unauthorized persons.
8. **Possession or Use of Personal Safety Devices**
    a. A DHS employee who possesses or uses a personal safety device (e.g. mace, pepper spray, taser, baton, defensive flashlights) is responsible for knowing and abiding by all laws, rules, regulations, and policies that govern the possession and use of such device.
    b. The misuse of a personal safety device may constitute a violation of law punishable by substantial civil or criminal penalty for which DHS will not provide a legal defense.

Section I: State Property Usage

1. Employees are responsible for reporting suspected criminal or administrative misconduct including fraud, waste, and abuse relating to any State program or operation. Negligent use and/or destruction of State property is prohibited.
2. Employees are not to use or permit the use of State property for anything other than official activities.
    a. Voicemails and emails should convey professional messages.
    b. Email, Internet and other computer tools and equipment are provided to employees for work-related reasons. However, the use of the Internet for non-work-related reasons is permitted on a basis similar to that applied to local telephone calls on state telephones, when the use is infrequent, of short duration, and does not interfere with work. This privilege may be withdrawn if abused. The display or transmission of sexually related material is prohibited. Other prohibited uses include, but are not limited to, ethnic slurs, racial or other derogatory jokes or remarks, game playing, or anything that may be considered harassment or expressing disrespect for others.
    c. All information in state computers and other state-owned tools and equipment such as cell phones, and any other technology, including but not limited to emails, text messages, etc., are subject to inspection by appropriate management at any time. No employee has a privacy interest in any information contained in a state computer or other state-owned tools and equipment.
3. State property includes but is not limited to:
    a. Office equipment (e.g. computers, telephones, cell phones, printers/copiers),
    b. Automobiles, and
    c. Supplies of all kinds.

> **NOTE** State employees are not covered by the Department of Administrative Services' Liability Auto Insurance while engaging in unauthorized use of state or personal vehicles while conducting DHS business.

4. Employees are prohibited from making or charging international telephone calls to the DHS, unless work-related. Local telephone calls of infrequent, short duration may be permitted. This privilege may be withdrawn if abused.
5. Employees are prohibited from using a state cell phone for personal calls.
6. Employees are prohibited from downloading or installing personal software of any kind on state computers or cellular phones.
7. Employees are prohibited from using personal electronic devices (i.e., cellphones, laptops, tablets etc.) to conduct DHS business.
8. Employees are prohibited from using personal emails to conduct DHS business.

Section J: Dress Code

1. Employees are expected to be clean and neat in appearance during work hours. As representatives of the State, employees should present a professional image during work hours. In certain types of jobs, employees may be asked to meet specific dress code standards or be required to wear uniforms. Policies may be developed by DHS organizational units as necessary or appropriate.
2. Below are the three (3) categories of dress in the workplace.
    a. **Business Professional** is the standard of dress expected among all employees. Suits, sports coats, ties, white or colored dress shirts are appropriate attire for men. Suits, dresses, blouses, white or colored dress shirts, skirts, are appropriate for women. Depending on the nature of the employee's job, some flexibility may be required.
    b. **Business Casual** is a less formal version of business professional, but should always be neat, clean, and suitable for the workplace.If lettered or illustrated attire is worn, it should not promote a particular political, moral, religious personal or other opinion. Attire that is obscene, vulgar, offensive, or inflammatory is prohibited.
    c. **Casual** is a more relaxed form of business casual, while still remaining professional.
3. Employees can be required to change inappropriate dress or be instructed to not wear the same or similar dress in the future. Should it be necessary for the employee to return home to change clothes, the employee will be required to use either compensatory time, personal leave, annual leave, or leave without pay (LWOP) during the period of absence.
4. Decisions on the appropriateness of dress and the procedures to be followed will be made on a case-by-case basis by the employee's supervisor, after consultation with their designated Human Resources Representative. Issues that will be considered include but are not limited to client or customer proximity, work function of the unit, and complaints received.
5. Body art that displays nudity, violence, criminal activity or vulgar language is strictly prohibited. Ear piercings are allowed. Small modest nose studs or rings are permitted.
6. Employees who do not comply with established dress code standards may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment.
7. For specific details on appropriate and inappropriate attire, please refer to DHS Policy #1201 A5: Dress Code Guidelines.

For additional information or assistance, please contact your designated Human Resources Representative.

1201 A1 Individual Conflict of Interest Attestation

1201 A2 Code of Ethics for Government Service

Georgia Department of Human Services
Human Resources Policy #1201 A2

Code of Ethics for Government Service

Any person in government service should:

A. Put loyalty to the highest moral principles and to country above loyalty to persons, party, or government department.

B. Uphold the Constitution, laws, and legal regulations of the United States and the State of Georgia and of all governments therein and never be a party to their evasion.

C. Give a full day's labor for a full day's pay and give to the performance of his duties his earnest effort and best thought.

D. Seek to find and employ more efficient and economical ways of getting tasks accomplished.

E. Never discriminate unfairly by the dispensing of special favors or privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not; and never accept, for himself or his family, favors or benefits under circumstances which might be construed by reasonable persons as influencing the performance of his governmental duties.

F. Make no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties of office, since a government employee has no private word which can be binding on public duty.

G. Engage in no business with the government, either directly or indirectly, which is inconsistent with the conscientious performance of his governmental duties.

H. Never use any information coming to him confidentially in the performance of governmental duties as a means for making private profit.

I. Expose corruption wherever discovered.

J. Uphold these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust.

1201 A3 Governor's Executive Order

1201 A4 Outside Organization Expense Reimbursement Request

1201 A5 Dress Code Guidelines

Georgia Department of Human Services
Human Resources Policy #1201 A5

Dress Code Guidelines

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References:	DHS Human Resources Policy #1201 – Conduct Standards and Ethics in Government		

Employee appearance contributes to the Department of Human Services' (DHS) culture and reputation. Employees are expected to present themselves in a professional manner that results in a favorable impression by colleagues, clients and customers.

It is the responsibility of every person working for DHS to adhere to this policy. **This dress code applies to all employees, students, interns, work-study personnel, and volunteers**. The DHS dress code shall be implemented or enforced in a manner that does not discriminate against an individual on the basis of race, color, sex, age, religion, national origin, disability or other protected classes. Employees should familiarize themselves with the policy and dress code guidelines. Employees should consult with their immediate supervisor or their designated Human Resources Representative for additional guidance.

Section A: Attire Examples

1. The Department recognizes three categories of dress in the workplace: **Business Professional, Business Casual, and Casual.** These are the standard of dress required Monday through Friday.
2. **Business Professiona**l attire is the standard of dress expected of all employees, specifically those in an office setting. Appropriate clothing includes:
   a. Men: Suits, sports coats, ties, dress shirts, and slacks
   b. Women: Suits, dresses, skirts, blouses, and slacks

> **NOTE** **As a reminder, telework spaces are considered an extension of the office setting. Employees should always be prepared for on-camera appearances.**

3. **Business Casual** attire is a less formal version of business professional but should always be neat, clean, and suitable for the workplace. If lettered or illustrated attire is worn, it should not promote a particular political, moral, religious, personal, or other opinion. Attire, which is

obscene, vulgar, offensive or inflammatory is prohibited. Appropriate clothing includes:

a. Dress pants or capris that stop directly above or below the ankle.

b. Casual dresses and skirts; skirt length should be at a length at which you can sit comfortably in public.

c. Casual shirts, dress shirts, sweaters, polo shirts, turtlenecks, suit jackets or sport jackets.

d. Comfortable shoes such as walking shoes, loafers, boots, flats and dress heels.

> **NOTE** **Heel heights should be sensible and aid the employee in preventing workplace accidents. Heel height should not prevent the employee from performing the essential functions of their job.**

4. **Inappropriate Business Casual Attire** includes but is not limited to:

a. Jeans, or denim of any kind, sweatpants, exercise pants, skinny jeans, shorts, leggings, and any spandex or other form-fitting pants.

> **NOTE** **Employees can wear leggings under a sweater dress or a skirt if the length of the sweater dress or skirt is appropriate.**

b. Short and/or tight skirts, miniskirts, shorts, skorts, sun dresses, beach dresses, and spaghetti strap dresses.

c. Tank tops, crop tops, shirts with potentially offensive words, terms, logos, pictures, cartoons, slogans, halter-tops, sweatshirts, and t-shirts unless worn under another blouse, shirt, jacket, or dress.

> **NOTE** Clothing that reveals your back, chest or stomach is not appropriate.

d. Athletic shoes, flip-flops, slippers (to include thong slippers), or plastic shoes.

5. Supervisors may approve exceptions to permit the wearing of jeans and athletic shoes only in appropriate circumstances (e.g., during an office move or site visit where business casual attire would not be recommended). Otherwise, athletic shoes are not to be worn in the office during the normal workday unless medically necessary. Medical documentation from a health care provider requiring the wearing of athletic shoes in the workplace must be submitted to the Office of Human Resources (OHR) for approval.

6. **Casual Attire** is a more relaxed form of business casual, while still remaining professional. Casual days will be allowed periodically as announced by the agency, division, or office approving authority or designee. Casual days are typically reserved for Fridays. Appropriate clothing includes the following:

a. Dress pants or capris that stop directly above or below the ankle.

b. Jeans, denim skirts, dresses and unmarked t-shirts. This policy does not allow jeans with rips, dirty jeans, jeans that sag or jeans that are too tight.

c. Casual dresses and skirts; skirt length should be at a length at which you can sit comfortably in public.

d. Casual shirts, dress shirts, sweaters, polo shirts, turtlenecks, suit jackets or sport jackets.

e. Comfortable shoes such as walking shoes, loafers, boots, flats, and dress heels.

7. **Court Attire** is Business Professional attire and must be worn for any court appearance, whether as a participant in a case, a witness, or an observer. This not only helps maintain decorum but shows respect for the judicial system. Casual attire is prohibited in any courtroom by DHS employees. Appropriate clothing includes:

   a. Men: Suits, sports coats, ties, dress shirts, and slacks

   b. Women: Suits, dresses, skirts, blouses, and slacks

Section B: Grooming and Personal Hygiene

1. **Hair Care and Accessories** – Hair should be clean, combed, and neatly trimmed or arranged. Hair should be styled in a manner that does not interfere with job performance. Unneat hair is not permissible regardless of length.
2. **Body Art** – In order to ensure a professional environment, visible tattoos with the potential to be perceived by anyone as distracting, derogatory, offensive or controversial should be covered at all times. Face and neck tattoos should be covered at all times.
3. **Piercings** – Jewelry and piercings should be kept to a minimum and should not hinder or interfere with job performance. Large hoop earrings that are more than two (2) inches are not allowed. Nose rings are permissible if they are small in size, circular hoops and do not cause distraction in the workplace. Management should contact OHR before directing an employee to remove a piercing.

> **NOTE** **The cost of any covering or removal of body art, tattoos, or body piercings is the responsibility of the employee.**

4. **Personal Hygiene** – Fragrances such as perfume, cologne, and after-shave should not be excessive or offensive to others. Makeup can be used for enhancing one's appearance. Extreme colors that could detract from a professional image are not acceptable.
5. **Reasonable Accommodation for Religious Practices** – Hairstyles, clothing, body art, piercings and/or accessories associated with religious practices will be given appropriate consideration for reasonable accommodation based on the nature of the job and supporting documentation. Employees should consult with their designated Human Resources Representative for reasonable accommodation for religious practices.

Section C: Policy Adherence

1. Employees can be required by any member of management to change inappropriate dress or be instructed not to wear the same or similar attire in the future. Should it be necessary for the employee to return home to change attire, the employee will be required to use annual leave, compensatory time, personal leave or leave without pay during the period of absence.

2. Ensuring consistent administration of the guidelines of this policy is the responsibility of all levels of management. Decisions regarding the appropriateness of attire and the procedures to be followed will be made on a case-by-case basis by management and the designated Human Resources Representative. Factors to be considered include, but are not limited to:
    a. Client or customer proximity.
    b. Work function of the unit.
    c. Determination that the attire does not comply with this policy.
    d. Complaints received.

Employees who do not comply with established dress code standards may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from employment.

1201 A6 Dress Code Frequently Asked Questions

:next-review-date:04/15/28 :release-date:

Georgia Department of Human Services
Human Resources Policy #1201 A6

Dress Code Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Why do we have a dress code?**

    The dress code is designed to provide guidelines for appropriate and inappropriate workplace attire. Since our appearance is a reflection of the Department of Human Services (DHS), employees must maintain a positive and professional appearance that does not offend customers, clients, or colleagues.

2. **When can business casual attire be worn?**

    Business Casual attire can be worn daily when employees are not required to be in formal settings, such as board meetings or court.

3. **Will we have casual Fridays?**

    While casual days are typically reserved for Friday, the agency maintains the authority to discontinue or limit casual attire, as it deems appropriate.

4. **If I am expected to appear in court wearing “Business Professional” attire, and later in the day I am in the field with clients, am I expected to wear “Business Professional” attire for the entire day?**

When employees are in business professional attire for court appearances then transition to the field, it is their discretion to remain in business professional attire versus business casual or environmental attire. Employees should always exercise good judgment when determining what to wear. The policy indicates that when conducting less than formal business for DHS "Business Casual" attire is appropriate. Environmental attire must be conducive to the specific work that the employee will perform and be approved by a supervisor or manager.

5. **Are there hairstyle restrictions?**

   Hair should be clean, combed and neatly trimmed or arranged. Hair should be styled in a manner that does not interfere with job performance.

6. **Are there special provisions or exceptions for interns, part-time employees or temporary workers?**

   No, the requirements are the same for interns, part-time employees, and temporary workers.

7. **What should I do if a manager other than my direct supervisor says something to me about my appearance?**

   Per Section F(l) of DHS Policy #1201: Conduct Standards and Ethics in Government, employees are to comply with instructions from all supervisors and managers. Before approaching non-direct reports, supervisors are encouraged to contact the immediate supervisor of the employee who is in violation of the dress code or demonstrating any other inappropriate conduct.