
WESTERN PIEDMONT REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Policy and Procedures Manual

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ARTICLE 1

INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1 General

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy manual is to set forth the policies that apply to the employees of the Western Piedmont Regional Transportation Authority (Authority). The Authority reviews its policies from time to time and may change the policies at any time without notice. If there is a dispute as to the interpretation of any policy, the interpretation of the Authority shall control. The Executive Director shall be responsible for administering these policies and for holding employees accountable for compliance with these policies.
- 1.2 Each employee receives a copy of this policy manual. Employees are required to read and abide by these policies. Failure to abide by these policies shall be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment with the Authority. This manual and the policies contained herein do not create an express or implied employment contract with the Authority. Employment is at will and may be terminated at any time by the employee or the Authority.
- 1.3 The Authority assigns and directs its employees, including determining the type of work to be done, the location of work, the time of work, the method and process for rendering services and establishing work and performance standards. The Authority establishes new employee positions and changes existing positions as needed.
- 1.4 It is the Authority's policy and practice to comply with all applicable federal and state employment related laws and regulations.

SECTION 2 Business Operations

- 2.1 The Authority adopts business operations policies for the effective and efficient management of its business. The Authority determines the methods and means by which its operations and services are performed. Employees shall abide by the Authority's business operations policies. (See ARTICLE 4 for Authority Business Operations Policies.)

SECTION 3 Federal and State

- 3.1 The Federal Transit Authority (FTA) and the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) provide funding to support the Authority. The FTA and State have policies, laws and/or regulations with which the Authority must comply. Authority employees shall abide by the policies, laws and regulations of

the FTA and the State of North Carolina regarding transportation and regarding Authority employees. (See Appendix B for FTA and State policies, laws and regulations).

SECTION 4 Adoption

- 4.1** The adoption of this policy manual including the policies in Appendix A and Appendix B replaces and supersedes previous policies adopted by the Authority.

ARTICLE 2

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

SECTION 1 Professionalism and Conflict of Interest

- 1.1** The Authority's reputation for integrity, fairness and effectiveness is one of its most valuable assets and is determined in part by the ethical standards and practices of its employees. Employment with the Authority is not to be used for personal gain.
- 1.2** Employees shall conduct their personal affairs and perform their duties and assignments, in an ethical manner. Employees shall avoid situations that may lead to a conflict, or the appearance of a conflict, between the employee's interest and the employee's responsibilities to the Authority.
- 1.3** Employees and their family members shall not request or accept gifts, favors or anything of value from anyone who does or may do business with the Authority. A family member is defined as a person related by blood or marriage, i.e., husband, wife, father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, aunt, uncle, nephew, niece or grandchild, including in-laws and step relations, (e.g., mother-in-law, step brother), or a person living in the household of the employee¹.
- 1.4** Employees shall not engage in any business of transaction or have a financial or personal interest, direct or indirect that is incompatible with the proper discharge of Authority duties or that would tend to impair independence of judgment and action in the performance of Authority duties.
- 1.5** Good judgment, courtesy and respect in relations between employees and others shall be used.
- 1.6** Employees shall dress for work in a professional manner and are to present a neat and professional image to the public. As uniforms are a critical part of this image, all drivers are required to wear a standardized uniform.
- 1.7** Employees are expected to report to work on time and to maintain a good attendance record. Directors may develop attendance policies for their work unit to establish and enforce uniform standards of performance.

1. This definition of family member applies throughout this policy manual.

SECTION 2 Solicitation

- 2.1** To promote and protect the relationship of the Authority and its customers, employees shall not solicit Authority business when their employment or service with the Authority ceases.
- 2.2** Employees shall not, either directly or indirectly, on their own account or in the service of others, solicit for business the Authority's contacts made during their employment or service with the Authority after termination of their employment or service. Employees shall not retain and shall not use the Authority's contact records and lists for personal gain.

SECTION 3 Employment of Family Members

- 3.1** For purposes of this policy, a family member is defined as any person related by blood, adoption, marriage, living in the same household, or people in relationships together. This policy applies to newly hired employees and to current employees who have changes in relationships (marrying another employee, for example), or changes in work assignments

Employment decisions are based on individual merit, and the Authority will consider employment of family members in the same or different departments. However, individuals may not supervise family members, supervise persons directly supervising family members, or participate in employment decisions concerning a family member.

An Authority employee may not directly supervise a family member. If a situation occurs where family members are employed in the same work area or reporting line (but one does not directly supervise the other or the other's immediate supervisor), each family member must arrange to be relieved from processes concerning any other family member such as:

- assessing the performance of the family member;
- considering the family member for promotion or salary adjustment;
- providing a leave of absence for the family member; or
- participating in other decisions that present a possible conflict of interest or impropriety.

The employee is responsible for complying with this policy when involved in employment decisions concerning a family member. All employees must inform Human Resources of potential or existing situations concerning employment of a family member.

SECTION 4 Probationary Period

- 4.1** The Authority has a probationary period to determine the acceptability of the performance of newly hired employees.

- 4.2 The Executive Director and department directors hire and supervise Authority employees. Newly hired employees shall serve a probationary period of six months to allow their supervisor a period of time to evaluate the acceptability of the performance of the employee in the position. If at any time during the probationary period the employee's performance is unacceptable to their supervisor, the employee may be discharged or transferred to another position, if available. It will be at the supervisor's discretion to extend the probationary period up to 90 days beyond the initial probationary period, if necessary.

SECTION 5 Employment Status

- 5.1 The Authority determines the status of each employee at the time of hiring. Employees are either full time, part time – benefited, part time – non-benefited, temporary or contract.
- 5.2 Full time employees work regularly forty (40) hours per week. Full time employees are entitled to the Employee Benefits set forth in Article 3 of this manual. Part time – benefited employees work regularly more than 20 hours per week but less than 40 hours per week regularly. Part time - benefited employees are entitled to limited Employee Benefits set forth in Article 3 of this manual. Part time – non-benefited employees work as scheduled but less than 20 hours per week or 1,000 hours annually. Part time – non-benefited employees are not entitled to the Employee Benefits set forth in Article 3 of this manual. Temporary employees are employed with the Authority on an as needed basis, either full or part time, and/or for the duration of an approved grant. Temporary employees are not entitled to the Employee Benefits set forth in Article 3 of this manual. Contract employees are employed through a written contract between the Authority and contracted individual. Contract employees are not entitled to the Employee Benefits set forth in Article 3 of this manual unless otherwise approved by the Authority's Executive Director.
- 5.3 The Authority controls specific work hours for each employee. The Department Directors set employee work schedules. Due to the nature of the work performed by the Authority, employees may be required to vary the hours of work within a week. Adjustments in the work schedule must be arranged with their supervisor at least one week in advance. Employees are expected to be at work on time and to perform their job duties during the work period.

SECTION 6 Compensation

- 6.1 Employees are to be paid compensation in accordance with applicable laws.
- 6.2 Employee salaries are quoted as annual or hourly amounts. Employees are paid bi-weekly by check or by direct deposit. Paycheck includes work previously completed in the last two weeks.

- 6.3** Deductions required by state and federal law are withheld from the employee's paycheck as well as deductions for insurance premiums or retirement contributions, or any other benefits for which the employee has authorized deductions, in whole or in conjunction with the Authority, if any. Deductions may be made to a final paycheck for all items agreed to by the employee and the Authority.
- 6.4** All employees shall be paid by direct deposit. Employees are responsible for filing direct deposit forms with the Finance Manager prior to the end of their first week of employment with the Authority.

SECTION 7 Transportation Demand Management

- 7.1** In an effort to reduce traffic congestion, the Authority may allow employees to utilize Traffic Demand Management ("TDM") initiatives.
- 7.2** After approval by the Executive Director, employees may take advantage of the following TDM initiatives:
- a) Bus Transportation – Employees are permitted and encouraged to ride Western Piedmont Regional Transit fixed-route buses free of charge by presenting their Western Piedmont Regional Transit issued identification card. Active members of the Transit Authority's Transit Advisory board may ride Authority buses or vans free of charge.

SECTION 8 Smoking and Break Time

- 8.1** Western Piedmont Transit Authority is a totally tobacco-free workplace. In an effort to protect the health of Authority employees and promote a healthy lifestyle, smoking or tobacco use is not permitted on or in Authority owned or leased facilities or vehicles. If an employee chooses to smoke or use tobacco, they will need to do so during their approved break time only and utilize their personal vehicle for such use. Employees who do not follow this policy will be subject to disciplinary actions as stipulated in Section 9 of this manual.
- 8.2** Authority employees may be granted a ten (10) minute break in the mornings and afternoons (except where the duties and responsibilities of the job prevent such), at which time they may leave workstations to pursue personal interests.

SECTION 9 Performance and Discipline

- 9.1** You are a valuable asset to Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority and your performance on the job is of great importance. Your work performance will be reviewed annually with you by your supervisor. The purpose of this evaluation is for your supervisor to identify areas in which you are performing well and the areas in which improvement is needed.

- 9.2** The Authority desires to employ competent employees with acceptable job performance. The Authority provides opportunities for employee training to enhance job performance. Employees are required to participate in seminars, conferences and trainings as determined by their supervisor.
- 9.3** The Executive Director and department directors hire, evaluate, discipline and discharge employees.
- 9.4** The Executive Director is hired, disciplined, evaluated and discharged by the Board of Directors. Employment of the Executive Director is at the will of the Board. The Executive Director may be discharged by the Board at any time.
- 9.5** The Executive Director and department directors prepare job descriptions for each employee. Employee job performance is evaluated by the Executive Director and department directors annually. Employees may be disciplined to improve job performance and for failure to abide by these policies.
- 9.6** When possible and appropriate, disciplinary action will follow a progressive sequence. The normal sequence of action is:
- First Step. Oral Counseling
 Second Step. Written Warning
 Third Step. Final warning and/or suspension without pay
 Fourth Step. Discharge
- 9.7** It is the overall goal of Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority to address discipline in a “positive manner”, whenever possible. Positive progressive discipline is an approach to solving discipline problems that appeal to the employee’s self respect rather than the fear of losing his/her job. Discipline should be centered on problems and not on people. The purpose of positive progressive discipline is to ensure that the employee is fully aware of any performance deficiencies that exist and to provide the employee with a reasonable opportunity to correct such deficiencies. Employees will be given an opportunity to respond to any intended disciplinary action on the part of the supervisor either orally or in writing.
- 9.8** Supervisory and management personnel may omit any stage of the above process if, in their opinion and with concurrence of the Human Resources Manager and Executive Director, the problem cannot be corrected by a less severe form of disciplinary action.

Oral Counseling

- 9.9** An oral counseling between the immediate supervisor and the employee is the appropriate disciplinary action in the following circumstances:

- a. occurrences of unacceptable deviations from established rules or regulations;
- b. establishment of an apparent pattern of behavior or performance which is contrary to the work goals of the employee's work group or department;
- b. decline or deterioration in previously acceptable conduct or work quality to levels below acceptable standards; and/or other
- c. instances of poor performance or conduct which interfere with the operation of the work unit or its personnel, but which, by themselves, are not sufficiently serious to warrant a written reprimand.

9.10 The oral counseling will be documented by the supervisor and signed by the employee, to provide a written record for the counseling and to provide the employee with a reminder of the work standards expected. Documentation of an oral counseling should be kept in the Supervisor's file for future reference, but will not be placed in the employee's official personnel file. In addition, an oral counseling cannot be appealed through the grievance process.

Written Warning

9.11 A written warning occurs when the employee fails to carry out agreed upon corrective actions to establish acceptable work or conduct standards after oral counseling; the following circumstances are examples of infractions but not an all inclusive or exhaustive list:

- aa. minor damage to or loss of Authority property because of the employee's negligence; and/or
- b. other deficiencies in performance or conduct which are serious enough to warrant more stringent action than a personal conference.
- c. failure to carry out agreed upon corrective actions already addressed in oral counseling.

9.12 The written warning will be prepared by the employee's immediate supervisor, and, prior to being delivered to the employee, must be approved as to form by the Human Resources Manager and Executive Director. A copy of the prior, documented oral counseling, if any, will be attached to the written warning. A copy of the written warning signed by the immediate supervisor and the employee (or witness) will be given to the Human Resources Manager and placed in the employee's official personnel file.

9.13 If the employee disagrees with the cause or content of the written warning, the employee may grieve this disciplinary action in accordance with the Authority's Grievance Policy, outlined in Article 2, Section 12 of the policies and procedures manual. Grievances must be submitted within seven (7) calendar days. They are to be submitted in writing to the Human Resources Manager, unless the grievance involves an action taken by the Human Resource Manager. In those instances the grievance would be directed to the Executive Director. If the grievance

involves action taken by the Executive Director, the grievance would be directed to the Chairman of the Board.

Final warning and/or suspension without pay

9.14 A final warning is given and includes the specific steps necessary to correct the employee's behavior. This step may also be accompanied by a temporary suspension without pay, not to exceed ten (10) working days. Suspension without pay is used when a supervisor feels a suspension would benefit the employee and/or Authority. A final warning and/or suspension without pay is the appropriate disciplinary action in the following circumstances, however this is not an all inclusive or exhaustive list:

- a. repetition of actions for which a written reprimand has been previously issued;
- b. major damage to or loss of Authority property through negligence or willful misuse by the employee; and/or
- c. performance or conduct which is severe in nature and interferes with Authority operations or with performance of duties by other personnel.

9.15 Department Managers may authorize suspension without pay after receiving approval of the Human Resource Manager and/or Executive Director. If the employee is to lose five or more days of pay, they will be subject to a disciplinary hearing. Once a determination has been made, the employee is to receive a written notice clearly stating the following:

- a. the reason(s) for the suspension;
- b. the duration of the suspension, including beginning and ending dates and times;
- c. notice of the employee's right to appeal the suspension with an outline of procedures to be followed if an appeal is desired; and
- d. notice that if the employee fails to return to work as expected following the suspension and fails to notify the supervisor of an acceptable reason for the failure to return to work, the employee will be considered to have terminated employment voluntarily.

9.16 If the employee disagrees with the suspension without pay, the employee may grieve this disciplinary action in accordance with the Authority's Grievance Policy, outlined in Article 2, Section 12 of the policies and procedures manual. Grievances must be submitted within seven (7) calendar days. They are to be submitted in writing and sent to the Human Resource Manager, unless the grievance involves an action taken by the Human Resource Manager. In those instances the grievance would be directed to the Executive Director. If the grievance involves actions taken by the Executive Director, the grievance would be directed to the Chairman of the Board.

Discharge

9.17 A discharge occurs after sufficient warning is given or when the seriousness of the offense warrants immediate discharge. The employee must turn in all Authority property at the time of discharge and prior to receiving his/her final paycheck. The following circumstances are examples of infractions that could warrant possible discharge:

- a. incompetence (including lacking the requisite skills or abilities to perform the assigned job);
- b. theft;
- c. physical assault against employees, customers, or visitors;
- d. violation of law, either on or off duty, resulting in a felony conviction;
- e. commission of an act of moral turpitude, including sexual harassment of students, visitors, or other employees;
- f. gross neglect of assigned duties;
- g. insubordination, willful disobedience, and/or refusal or failure to follow directives or perform work properly assigned by a supervisor;
- h. dishonest actions, including falsification of information to secure a position with the Authority or falsification or intentional destruction of any other Authority records;
- i. gross or repeated failure to abide by rules and regulations of the Authority, or of federal, state, or local laws;
- j. mismanagement of a position by action, inaction, or neglect that places the lives or property of others in jeopardy; and/or
- j. substandard performance or conduct which continues despite attempts at correction through discipline or counseling.

9.18 Department directors may authorize dismissal after obtaining approval from the Human Resource Manager and/or Executive Director.

SECTION 10 Predissmissal and Predisciplinary Action Hearings

10.1 The Authority will conduct a hearing before taking any disciplinary action which would result in the coworker's losing a right (money or status) through demotion, suspension without pay for more than five days, or dismissal. This policy applies to all full-time coworkers who have completed their initial probationary period, and part-time regular coworkers who have completed at least six months of service and who are employed year-round. Other part-time, seasonal, or temporary workers are not covered.

10.2 The following steps should be followed when conducting a pre-disciplinary hearing:

- a) The supervisor or manager will discuss the situation with the Human Resources Manager and/or Executive Director prior to conducting the

hearing.

- b) Provide notice to the coworker of the hearing, either orally or in written form, same day notice is fine. Tell the employee that you are holding a hearing to discuss a proposed personnel action and state whatever that proposed action may be.
- c) Invite the Human Resources Manager or other neutral person designated by the Executive Director as a "neutral advisor". This advisor is a witness not only on behalf of the Authority as to the impartial, informal hearing but also serves as a witness to what the employee is told and to the employee receiving a full and fair opportunity to present his/her side of the situation.
- d) Conduct an informal, objective, impartial hearing. Present the charges and provide a full opportunity for the coworker to present defenses or reasons against the proposed personnel action.
- e) Do not make a decision at the end of this particular hearing, and do not have a pre-prepared letter concerning the disciplinary action, since this is perceived under the law as being a preconceived decision. Wait at least 24 hours before making a final decision. Either record the hearing or take notes of the hearing. The recording or notes are the property of the Authority and do not have to be given to the coworker. The employee may record the meeting as well.
- f) If the final decision is to take disciplinary action, put that decision in writing listing specific reasons for the decision being made. A Notice of Personnel Action form may be used for this purpose. Give a copy of the written decision to the coworker and send a copy to the Personnel Department for inclusion in the coworker's personnel record.
- g) Notify the disciplined coworker that provisions of the formal grievance procedure are available after any suspension, demotion, or dismissal has taken place. The pre-disciplinary hearing does not replace the formal grievance hearing.

10.3 The Department Manager will give written notice to the employee of the intent to dismiss the employee from employment or to suspend for more than five working days consisting of the following information:

- a) The Notice of Charges (What the employee did or failed to do).
- b) The particular rule(s) the employee allegedly violated.
- c) The possibility of disciplinary action if the department substantiates the allegations.
- d) The date, time, and place of the hearing during which a discussion of the allegations will take place. The department must allow a reasonable time.
- e) The employee's right to receive assistance from another person of his or her choosing.

If the employee submits a response either orally or in writing, their supervisor will take into consideration any information submitted in the final decision. The employee's supervisor will respond to the employee in writing. An employee is not required to respond and does not waive any rights under this policy by not responding prior to dismissal.

- 10.4** The department director will conduct the hearing before discharge/suspension and will be accompanied by another supervisor or management employee. The hearing is considered part of the final stage of fact finding and a decision should not be rendered until at least 24 hours after the hearing has concluded and any new information has been considered. See Article 2, Section 10 of the policies and procedures manual for additional guidance on the hearing process.
- 10.5** The final decision should be provided to the employee in writing and within 10 working days. The letter is to be sent to the employee's place of residence via certified mail.
- 10.6** If the employee disagrees with the cause or content of the written reprimand, the employee may grieve this disciplinary action in accordance with the Authority's Grievance Policy, outlined in Article 2, Section 12 of the policies and procedures manual. Grievances must be submitted within seven (7) calendar days. They are to be submitted in writing and sent to the Executive Director, unless the grievance involves an action taken by the Executive Director. In those instances the grievance would be directed to the Chairman of the board.

Administrative Leave With or Without Pay

- 10.7** Under certain circumstances it may be necessary to restrict an employee immediately from performing duties at the work site. The circumstances usually involve potential danger to the employee, co-workers, or the public, or the employee's inability to discharge assigned duties satisfactorily. Because of the need for immediate action, the decision to suspend an employee in such circumstances shall be the responsibility of the supervisor, or Department Manager.
- 10.8** When circumstances of this nature arise, the employee shall be placed on an administrative leave with or without pay pending the investigation of the incident or incidents involved. The initial determination to place the employee on administrative leave with or without pay shall be made by the supervisor, or department director.
- 10.9** An employee placed on administrative leave with or without pay is not considered to be in a disciplinary mode during the administrative leave period. During an administrative leave, an employee is expected to refrain from coming onto Authority property at any time unless requested to do so by the employee's

supervisor.

- 10.11** Any employee that has completed their probationary period and are being considered for a period and are being considered for a non-paid suspension of five days or more must be provided a predisclipinary hearing, as outlined in Article 2, Section 10 of the Authority's policies and procedure manual.
- 10.12** Based upon the outcome of the investigation, the employee may be allowed to return to his/her normal duties or may be subject to disciplinary action. The placement of an employee on administrative leave with or without pay shall be immediately reported to the department director, the Human Resources Officer and the Executive Director.
- 10.13** Whenever an employee is cleared from administrative leave and found to be free of any wrong doing, they are to be immediately placed back in an active status and the department director, the Human Resources officer and the Executive Director are to be notified. If the employee's non-paid leave resulted in a delay of the employees pay check processing, the employee's manager or supervisor should notify the Finance Department so arrangements can be made to cut a manual check.

SECTION 11 Outside Employment

- 11.1** The work of the Authority takes precedence over other occupational interests or employment. Outside employment is self-employment or any employment for salaries, wages, tips or commission other than with the Authority.
- 11.2** Any employee considering outside employment shall report to the Executive Director this intention prior to beginning the job, occupation or self-employment. The Executive Director shall review the outside employment request and assure that:
- a) The nature of the work will not create a conflict of interest with the Authority.
 - b) The outside employment does not result from affiliation with the Authority.
 - c) The schedule or total hours worked will not conflict with the performance of the employee's Authority duties.
- 11.3** If approved by the Executive Director, outside employment shall not interfere with the employee's regular work schedule and performance. If attendance or work performance is determined by the Executive Director to be compromised by outside employment, approval for outside employment may be withdrawn.
- 11.4** Failure to seek approval for outside employment or to begin and maintain such employment when not approved or when approval is withdrawn is prohibited.

SECTION 12 Grievances

- 12.1** The Authority encourages communication between the Executive Director and employees regarding grievances. Grievances are disputes involving the Executive Director or other employees, these policies and their application or working conditions.
- 12.2** An employee with a grievance shall submit it to the Human Resource Manager and/or Executive Director in writing with any supporting documentation within seven (7) calendar days of the act that caused the grievance. The Human Resource Manager and/or Executive Director shall review the information submitted by the employee and determine the means to resolve the dispute, including mediation. The employee will be notified within seven (7) calendar days as to a date and time of a scheduled hearing. Once a hearing has been conducted and a decision has been made, the Authority will notify the employee of the decision and consequent actions to be taken, via letter sent certified mail to their home, within seven (7) calendar days. When the grievance is about the Human Resource Manager, it is submitted to the Executive Director who will review it, conduct any independent investigation deemed necessary, and make a recommendation. If the grievance is about the Executive Director, it is submitted to the Chairman of the Board of Directors, who will review it, conduct any independent investigation deemed necessary, and make a recommendation for a resolution by the Board. The decision of the Executive Director and Board respectively are final as to grievances.

SECTION 13 Resignation

- 13.1** The Authority needs the continued productivity of its employees to properly provide services.
- 13.2** The Executive Director shall give at a minimum of thirty (30) calendar days written notice to the Board of Directors prior to resignation to resign in good standing. All other employees shall give the Authority at least fourteen (14) calendar days written notice of resignation to resign in good standing.

SECTION 14 Drug and Alcohol Use and Testing

- 14.1** The Authority is a drug-free workplace and will meet all FTA Drug and Alcohol regulations and policies. Employees shall report to work and perform their job duties in a sober condition, free of alcohol and any controlled drug or substance and free from the abuse of any legal or prescribed drugs.
- 14.2** The Authority will conduct post-conditional offer of employment drug and/or alcohol testing for all its positions. A positive test result for controlled drugs or substances or alcohol will result in revocation of any conditional offer of

employment to an applicant.

- 14.3** Employees shall inform their supervisor of the use of prescribed medication that may impair ability to perform work or affect safety.
- 14.4** The unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of any controlled drug or substance is strictly prohibited in the workplace. Any arrest or conviction pursuant to any drug statute that occurs must be reported to the Authority, in writing, no less than five (5) days after such arrest or conviction.
- 14.5** The Authority reserves the right to search employer-owned or controlled items used by an employee, (e.g., desks, lockers, vehicles and equipment). Employees should not expect privacy in these containers. Law enforcement officials will be notified in appropriate cases.
- 14.6** Drug or controlled substance and alcohol abuse-related behaviors are prohibited by the Authority and will result in termination from employment. Such behaviors include, but are not limited to:
- a) Violation of the North Carolina Controlled Substance Act, the North Carolina Toxic Vapors Act or the US Controlled Substance Act; or
 - b) A positive alcohol test indicates a blood alcohol level of 0.04 or higher; or
 - c) A positive test for a controlled substance; or
 - d) Abuse of a non-controlled substance that results in a positive test for the substance; or
 - e) Failure to notify the Executive Director of any charge or arrest for any alcohol or drug-related crime or any conviction.
 - f) The refusal or failure to submit to an alcohol or drug test or to authorize the release of the test results to the Authority; or
 - g) Evidence of tampering with a drug or alcohol test being administered by or for the Authority.
- 14.7** Employees suspected of having a dependency on alcohol or of using controlled drugs or substances or the abuse of prescription or over the counter medication shall submit to drug and/or alcohol testing as directed by their supervisor. Such suspicion may be based upon facts or inferences from one or more of the following:
- (a) Direct observation of drug or alcohol abuse and/or the physical symptoms of being under the influence
 - (b) Abnormal or erratic behavior at work, a pattern of absenteeism, tardiness or deterioration in performance
 - (c) A report of substance or alcohol use provided by a reliable and credible source
 - (d) Any employee involved in an accident meeting the definition of an NTD reportable incident(e) Evidence an employee is

involved in the use, possession, sale, solicitation or transfer of drugs while on the job or operating Authority vehicles or other equipment

(f) An employee's admission of substance abuse.

14.8 The administration of controlled substance testing shall be in accordance with G.S. § 95-232.

14.9 Employees shall read and execute a separate Drug and Alcohol Policy Acknowledgement Form.

14.10 The drug and alcohol Designated Employee Representative or the Operations Director shall answer any questions regarding this policy.

SECTION 15 Personnel Records

15.1 The Authority documents personnel transactions that become a part of the personnel record of the employee. Personnel transactions include, but are not limited to: promotion; pay change; retirement; discipline; resignation; discharge and benefits transactions.

15.2 The Human Resource Manager maintains and is the custodian of the Authority personnel records. Employees shall notify the Human Resource Manager of any changes such as name, address and telephone number. To the extent required by law, personnel records are confidential. Employees may review their personnel records, by appointment, during regular business hours and obtain copies. Employees, by written authorization, may permit another person to review their personnel records and obtain copies.

SECTION 16: Ethics Policy

16.1 The purpose for this ethics policy is to support a culture of openness, trust, and integrity in all Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority management and business practices. The Transit Authority is committed to conducting all of its business affairs and activities with the highest standards of ethical conduct. The Authority is also committed to the responsible use of Authority assets; to provide accurate, complete and objective information; to respect the confidentiality of financial and other information; to act in good faith and exercise due care in all we do; to comply with all rules and regulations, and to proactively promote ethical behavior.

16.2 This policy prohibits any dishonest or fraudulent act, including but not limited to:

- Misappropriation of funds, securities, supplies or other assets.
- Impropriety in the handling or reporting of money or financial transactions.

- Profiteering as a result of insider knowledge of company plans or activities.
- Disclosing confidential and proprietary information to outside parties.
- Intentional, false representation or concealment of a material fact for the purpose of inducing another to act upon it to procure an advantage, benefit or gain.
- Accepting or seeking favors or anything of material value (more than \$50) from contractors, sub-contractors, vendors or persons providing services/materials to Authority.
- Destruction, removal, or unauthorized use of records, furniture, fixtures, and equipment.
- Any similar or related irregularity.

16.3 No employee, officer, or agent of the Authority shall participate in the award or administration of a contract supported by Federal funds if a real or apparent conflict of interest would be involved. This includes any situation in which any of the following has a financial interest in the firm selected for an award:

- An employee, officer, or agent involved in the selection, award or administration of the a contracted supported by federal funds;
- Members of that person’s immediate family;
- That person’s partner (“partner” is not defined, but presumably includes that person’s spouse or domestic partner), or
- That person’s current (or soon to be) employer, or current (or soon to be) employer of that persons immediate family, or current (or soon to be) employer of that persons partner.

16.4 Violations of the Ethics Policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Each member of management will be familiar with the types of improprieties that might occur within his or her area of responsibility and be alert for any indication of irregularity. An employee, volunteer, consultant, vendor, contractor, or outside agency doing business with the Authority shall immediately report any irregularity that is detected or suspected, as instructed below under ‘Reporting Ethics Violations.’

16.5 Employees and volunteers are expected to protect the Authority’s property at all times; including cash, equipment, records, employee, and customer information. This also requires employees and volunteers to maintain confidentiality regarding Authority records, and employee and customer information.

16.6 Questions, reports of violations or concerns about compliance with the subject described in this policy, are to be reported to the employee’s supervisor, or the Human Resources Manager.

SECTION 17 Unlawful Workplace Discrimination and Harassment

17.1 The Authority is an equal opportunity employer. Employment with the Authority

is based on merit, qualifications and job performance.

- 17.2** The Authority does not discriminate based on race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.
- 17.3** The Authority promotes a work environment free of unlawful workplace discrimination and harassment. In accordance with federal, state and local anti-discrimination laws, an Authority employee shall not unlawfully discriminate or harass any individual on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.
- 17.4** Complaints under this Section should be reported immediately to the Executive Director or the Chairman of the Board of Directors or to the Authority's EEO Officer. For more details on the complaint procedure, refer to Appendix A, Section 6 of this manual.

ARTICLE 3

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

SECTION 1 General

1.1 Employees will accrue vacation leave, holidays and sick leave while on paid full time employee status. No leave will be accrued during unpaid leave or workers compensation leave.

SECTION 2 Vacation

2.1 The Authority provides compensated vacation leave for its full time employees.

2.2 The Supervisor of each employee must approve time off for vacation leave in advance.

2.3 Full time employees are entitled to ten (10) days of compensated vacation leave each year during the first three years of employment, twelve (12) days during the third to fifth year of employment and fifteen (15) days after five years of employment. Part time – benefited employees are entitled to five (5) days of compensated vacation leave. Accruals for part time – benefited employees do not increase with years of service. Vacation leave accrues from the date of employment and each succeeding anniversary date thereafter. No more than 240 hours of vacation leave may be carried over to the next fiscal year. Employees are not compensated for unused vacation time; however, vacation leave exceeding 240 hours will be transferred to sick leave at the end of each fiscal year on June 30th.

2.4 An employee's accrued vacation, up to a maximum of 30 days, will be paid upon termination of employment.

SECTION 3 Holidays

3.1 The Authority observes the celebration of certain holidays each year.

3.2 The Authority is closed in observance of the following holidays each year

(although bus service may be provided):

New Year's Day
Martin Luther King Day
Good Friday or Easter Monday
Memorial Day
Independence Day
Labor Day
Thanksgiving Day and the Friday following
Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and the day after Christmas
If the holiday falls on Saturday, the preceding Friday will be observed. If
the holiday falls on Sunday, the following Monday will be observed.

- 3.3** Full time employees will be paid their regular rate for these scheduled holidays. Should an employee be required to work on an observed holiday, the employee will be compensated with an additional eight (8) hours leave at a time to be mutually agreed upon by the employee and their supervisor.

SECTION 4 Sick Leave

- 4.1** The Authority provides compensated sick leave to its full time and part time – benefited employees to provide an employee with time to recover from illness.
- 4.2** Sick leave must be requested by the employee and approved by their Supervisor. Employees must telephone their Supervisor at the beginning of the workday to report absence caused by illness and the anticipated length of the absence.
- 4.3** Full time employees accrue one day of sick leave for each month of employment. Part time – benefited employees accrue one half (1/2) day of sick leave for each month of employment. There is no compensated sick leave except that which accrues to the employee. If the employee needs additional time to recover from illness, the employee must use vacation leave. When vacation leave is exhausted, the employee may request time off from work without compensation.
- 4.4** No portion of accumulated sick leave is paid to the employee upon termination of employment.
- 4.5** Employees on sick leave during an observed holiday are credited with vacation leave for the holiday.

SECTION 5 Leave Without Pay

- 5.1** Upon the recommendation of the department director and with the approval of the Executive Director, an employee may be granted a leave of absence without pay for reasons of personal disability, personal illness, family illness or other reasons deemed justified by the Executive Director.

- 5.2 A leave without pay may not exceed six months. A leave of absence will be considered only after all paid time off has been exhausted and it has been determined that the employee's absence will not interfere with normal business operations.

SECTION 6 Bereavement Leave

- 6.1 Employees should communicate the need for bereavement leave as soon as is practicable. In the event of the death of an employee's parent or foster parent, sister, brother, spouse, domestic partner, child, step-child, father-in-law, mother-in-law, step-parent, grandparent, grandchild, father or mother of the employee's domestic partner:
- 6.2 The employee is allowed three (3) consecutive days of leave immediately following the death, if requested. The employee will be paid only for those days that fall on his/her regularly scheduled work days. The employee is allowed one additional day of paid leave (for a total of four (4) days paid leave) if travel more than 500 miles each way is involved.
- 6.3 An employee may request approval for additional time off to be charged against accrued vacation. If no accrued vacation is available for requested additional time off, the supervisor may grant leave without pay.
- 6.4 Supervisor consideration will be given on an individual basis to requests for bereavement leave in the event of the death of a person not bearing a relationship to the staff employee, as stated above. A staff employee may be requested to verify the relationship, death, and distance traveled before the Authority pays bereavement leave. Bereavement leave is paid on a regular, straight-time basis and is not counted as time worked when computing overtime.

SECTION 7 Family and Medical Leave Act

- 7.1 The Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority complies with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) which is a federal law that provides employees the right to take a leave of absence for family or medical reasons while maintaining job protection. Any individual who has been employed by the Authority for a total of at least 12 months at the time of the leave of absence, and has worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12-month period preceding the leave is eligible for a family or medical leave.
- 7.2 The Authority will provide up to 12 work weeks of leave within any 12-month period for any of the following reasons:
- a) Birth of an employee's child(ren);

- b) adoption of a child by the employee, or official placement of a child with the employee for foster care (leaves for birth or adoption must be taken within 12 months of the event);
- c) care of a son, daughter, spouse or parent (not parent-in-law) having a serious health condition;
- d) incapacity of an employee as a result of a serious health condition.
- e) For certain qualifying exigencies arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on active duty or is under a call or order to active duty in the Armed Forces, including the National Guard or Reserves; or
- f) For the care of a Covered Service member with a serious injury or illness related to certain types of military services (up to 26 weeks during a single 12 month period).

Leave for the care of an adult son or daughter (at least 18 years old) is not covered unless required as a result of "mental or physical disability" as those terms are defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- 7.3** The maximum amount of leave that may be taken in a 12 month period for all reasons combined is 12 weeks, with one exception. For leaves to care for a Covered Service Member, the maximum combined leave entitlement is 26 weeks, with leaves for all other reasons constituting no more than 12 of those 26 weeks.
- 7.4** The leave year will be determined by using a "rolling" 12 month period measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave.
- 7.5** The Authority requires a 30-day notice if the leave is foreseeable. For unforeseen circumstances, the Authority requires as much notice as is practicable.
- 7.6** These leaves of absence are without pay; however, accrued vacation time and other paid leave programs, as appropriate under Authority policies, must be used as part of the 12-week period. The Authority may require the health care provider to certify the necessity of the medical leave. Medical leave will be limited to the duration of the serious health condition, as defined by FMLA.
- 7.7** An employee may take intermittent leave or leave on a reduced work schedule if medically necessary for his/her own serious health condition or the serious health condition of an immediate family member. Such leave is not available for birth, adoption or foster care.
- 7.8** The Authority will continue benefit programs in which an employee was enrolled

at the time of FMLA leave. In order for the coverage to be continued, the employee will be responsible for his/her portion of the cost. If an employee does not return from a leave or returns to employment but does not remain for a minimum period of thirty (30) days, he/she must reimburse the Authority for the cost of benefits coverage during the leave unless the reason for failure to return is due to a continuing serious health condition, either his/her own or a family member's, or because of other circumstances beyond the employee's control.

- 7.9** A health care provider's certification will be required for return to work from the employee's own serious health condition. The department will return the employee to the same position he/she had before the leave or an equivalent position. The employee will be provided the level of benefits and seniority he/she had before the leave started.

SECTION 8 Insurance

- 8.1** The Authority may provide access to insurance coverage as a benefit to its full time employees. Insurance coverage may include but is not necessarily limited to: group health and medical insurance; dental insurance; life insurance; accidental death and dismemberment; long-term disability; cancer insurance; short-term disability; long term care; and supplemental life insurance. The Authority may or may not contribute to the payment of the premiums.
- 8.2** Any insurance provided by the Authority to its full time employees shall be governed by the terms and conditions of the policy(s). The employee may add insurance coverage for a spouse or dependents in accordance with the terms of the policy.
- 8.3** The Board of Directors shall determine if Authority funds are used to subsidize any insurance for full time employees or their eligible dependants.

SECTION 9 Retirement Plan

- 9.1** The Authority may contribute to the North Carolina Local Government Employees' Retirement System plan and/or a 401(k) Retirement Plan on behalf of full time and part time - benefited, eligible employees.
- 9.2** Any retirement plan provided by the Authority to its full time and part time - benefited employees shall be governed by the terms and conditions of the plan.

SECTION 10 Workers' Compensation

- 10.1** The Authority shall comply with all applicable workers' compensation laws and regulations.

- 10.2** An employee who is out of work due to a work related injury will receive only that portion of his/her salary as required by law. If the absence from work meets the FMLA definition of serious health condition, the leave will be counted as FMLA leave.

ARTICLE 4 BUSINESS OPERATIONS POLICIES

SECTION 1 Travel

- 1.1** The Authority may require employees to travel out of town on Authority business. The Authority provides reimbursement of reasonable out of town travel expenses approved in advance by the Director for Authority business. Employees must exercise good judgment in selecting reasonably priced hotels, motels, meals and transportation. The Director or Board of Directors must approve any exceptional circumstances in advance.
- 1.2** Whenever possible, travel for training or conferences sponsored by, or funded with grants from the North Carolina Department of Transportation shall be at State reimbursement rates. Should expenses exceed these rates, then the excess costs must be covered with local or other non-state funding.
- 1.3** Reimbursement for out of town mileage for use of an employee's personal vehicle for Authority business is at the standard Internal Revenue Service rate.
- 1.4** A request for reimbursement for out of town travel and mileage must be submitted to the Human Resource Manager for initial approval and then forwarded to the Finance Director for final approval, prior to making travel arrangements. The request will not be approved unless submitted on the Authority standard *Request for Reimbursement* form, available on the Authority server. Reasonable expenses shall not exceed the pre-determined figures set from time to time by the Board of Directors. Receipts are required for reimbursement, with the exception of meal reimbursements, which must be accompanied by a receipt if the reimbursement request exceeds \$25.00.
- 1.5** The Authority may make available an Authority vehicle for employee use for travel on Authority business. Use of an Authority owned or controlled vehicle is limited to employees with a valid North Carolina driver license. Personal use of Authority owned or a controlled vehicle by an employee is prohibited. Employees are responsible for ensuring that vehicles are clean and fueled after each use.

- 1.6 Should the Authority allow the use of any Authority paid credit or debit card, only allowable, authorized reimbursable expenses are to be charged to the Authority. Unauthorized use of an Authority credit or debit cards is prohibited.

SECTION 2 Information Technology

- 2.1 Internet access and use is a privilege. The Internet is a valuable resource tool. Employees are encouraged to use the Internet in the performance of their duties or to enhance their effectiveness. The Authority provides information systems as tools to accomplish work assignments. The use of the Internet and email by Authority employees shall be responsible, professional, and consistent with Authority policies, all applicable laws, and the employee's job responsibilities.
- 2.2 Authority employees shall make no intentional use of Internet or email in an illegal, improper, malicious, or obscene manner.
- 2.3 Authority employees are responsible for disseminating accurate Authority information via the Internet. An employee must provide an electronic mail address allowing the recipient to contact the Authority employee responsible for making the information available. If requested, employees shall provide a reference for the information, its source, and the date at which it was current. Employees must be aware of, and at all times attempt to, prevent potential Authority liability in the use of the Internet.
- 2.4 Incidental use, i.e., use on an occasional basis, of an Authority owned information resource by Authority employees is permitted with the following restrictions:
- a) Employees shall not expect privacy or confidentiality as may otherwise apply to the use of technology.
 - b) Such use is subject to this policy including inspection and monitoring.
 - c) Such use does not interfere with the employee's performance of Authority duties in a timely and efficient manner.
 - d) Such use does not interfere with the job performance or productivity of any other employees or undermine the use of Authority resources for official purposes.
 - e) Incidental use of technology resources by an employee neither expresses nor implies sponsorship or endorsement by the Authority.
 - f) Shall not be used to operate or promote a business for personal profit or gain.
 - g) Shall not be used in an illegal, improper, malicious, or obscene manner.
- 2.5 *Electronic Mail*
When sending or forwarding email, Authority employees shall identify themselves clearly and accurately. Anonymous or pseudonymous posting is forbidden.
- 2.6 Harassing and other offensive communications and images are prohibited.

Harassment includes, but is not limited to, any derogatory transmission referencing a person's race, religion, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. Offensive communications include, but are not limited to, any derogatory transmission referencing a person's sexual orientation or physique; insensitive, derogatory, insulting defamatory or sexually explicit messages or images; obscene language; chain letters and jokes; and gossip of any kind.

2.7 *Requests for Information*

Requests for information received electronically should be given the same care and consideration that other verbal or written request are given. Refer to Section 3 of the Business Operations Policy whenever personnel information is being requested.

2.8 *Recordkeeping*

Electronic records are to be kept and maintained in accordance with law. Violations of law, including copyright and trademark infringement, and the sending and receiving of obscenity and child pornography are prohibited.

2.9 *Viruses*

All files, such as spreadsheets, databases and word processing documents, downloaded from sources external to the Authority must be scanned for viruses. Software programs shall not be downloaded without prior approval of the Director. This includes software, freeware or other Internet distributed software programs.

2.10 *System Security*

The Internet provides easy access to software distributed by companies on a trial basis. This easy access does not indicate that the software is free or that it may be distributed freely. All applicable software copyright and licensing laws and Authority IT policies must be followed. The safety and security of the Authority's network and resources are paramount when using the Internet. Employee passwords are confidential. An employee is responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of user password(s). Employees are prohibited from using passwords, accessing files, retrieving stored communications or disclosing information or email messages unless authorized to do so. This regulation applies to the use of passwords or encryption keys assigned to others. Email messages and other transfer of information via the Internet are not secure. Employees shall not send confidential communications via the Internet. Employees shall not use the Internet to transfer sensitive information such as credit card information.

2.11 All messages are records of the Authority. The Authority reserves the right to access and disclose all messages sent over its electronic mail system and to enter an employee's email files whenever there is a business need to do so or for any other purpose deemed appropriate, to include but not limited to insuring the proper use of the system and compliance with these policies.

- 2.12 Notwithstanding any statement herein, or in any policy or in any verbal statements, the Authority Director has the sole discretion to grant, transfer, suspend, or cancel an employee's Internet access at any time for any reason.

SECTION 3 Personnel Records

- 3.1 Any person may have access to the information listed below for the purpose of inspection, examination, and copying, during Authority regular business hours.
- a) Name
 - b) Age
 - c) Date of original employment or appointment to the Authority
 - d) Current position and title
 - e) Office to employee is assigned
 - f) Current salary
 - g) Dates and amount of most recent change in salary
 - h) Date of most recent promotion, demotion, transfer, suspension, separation, or other change in position classification

Public information requests are to be directed to the WPRTA Human Resources Manager and an information request form must be completed. It is the policy of the Authority to provide requested information within 10 days, whenever practical. Requestors may be required to pay a processing fee when large amounts of information are being requested. This fee is required to offset copying costs and must be paid before information will be released.

- 3.2 Access to such information shall be governed by the following provisions:
- a) All disclosures of records shall be documented by a written record (except for authorized persons processing personnel actions) of the following information: Name of employee; information disclosed; date information disclosed; name and address of the person to whom the disclosure is made; and name of person making disclosure. This information must be kept on file for a minimum of two (2) years.
 - b) Upon request, the record of disclosure shall be made available to the employee to whom it pertains.
 - c) A person inspecting a personnel record may copy the information; any available photocopying facilities may be provided and the cost charged and paid by the individual.
 - d) Any person denied access to the information listed in Section 12 of this Article shall have a right to compel compliance with these provisions by application to a court for injunctive or other appropriate relief.

3.3 All information contained in an Authority's employee's personnel file, other than the information listed in Subsection 3.1 hereinabove will be maintained as confidential, and shall be open to public inspection only in the following instances:

- a) The employee or employee's duly authorized agent may examine all portions of the employee's personnel file, except (1) letters of reference solicited prior to employment, and (2) information concerning a medical disability, mental or physical, that a prudent physician would not divulge to the patient.
- b) A licensed physician designated in writing by the employee may examine all materials in the employee's medical records.
- c) By order of a court of competent jurisdiction, any person may examine such portion of an employee's personnel file as may be ordered by the court.
- d) In accordance with General Statute 105-368(i), an official of any agency of the State or Federal government, or a political subdivision of the State or Federal Government, may inspect any portion of a personnel file when such information is deemed by the Executive Director to be necessary and essential to the pursuance of a proper function of the inspecting agency. Addresses of employees who may be liable for taxes may be released, However, no information shall be divulged for the purpose of assisting in a criminal prosecution of the employee.
- e) An employee may sign a written release, to be placed with the employee's personnel file, that permits the Executive Director to provide, either in person, by telephone, or by mail, information specified in the release to prospective employers, educational institutions, or other persons specified in the release.
- f) The Executive Director, with concurrence of the Board of Directors, may inform any person of the employment or non-employment, promotion, demotion, suspension or other disciplinary action, reinstatement, transfer, or dismissal of an Authority employee and the reasons for the personnel action. Before releasing the information the Executive Director shall determine in writing that the release is essential to maintaining public confidence in the administration of Authority services or to maintaining the level and quality of services. This written determination shall be retained in the office of the Executive Director, is a record available for public inspection and shall become part of the employee's personnel file.
- g) Each individual requesting access to confidential information will be required to submit satisfactory proof of identity.
- h) A record shall be made of each disclosure and placed in the employee's personnel file.

SECTION 4 Operator's Uniform and Appearance Policy

- 4.1** Operators are required to be in uniform when performing duties for WPRTA. This policy provides details for operators regarding WPRTA's expectations regarding each operator's personal appearance and regarding the issuance and maintenance of uniforms to operators. This policy is subject to change at WPRTA's sole discretion.
- 4.2** An operator reporting for work or observed out of uniform while on duty will be issued a Performance Report. If the operator has written authorization for being out of uniform, a performance report will not be issued. If being out of uniform poses a safety hazard, the operator will be relieved of duty.
- 4.3** Personal Appearance Standards
Operators / employees are required to maintain high standards of personal hygiene, cleanliness, and grooming habits. Uniforms are to be clean, serviceable and wrinkle free.

Shirts must be tucked in at all times.

Hair, sideburns, mustaches and beards must be kept washed, neat and trimmed and present a professional appearance. Hair must be under control so as not to interfere with the safe operation of the coach. For safety reasons, hair longer than shoulder length should be tied back. All mustaches must be trimmed so that the operator's upper lip remains visible.

Hands and fingernails must be clean.

Overuse of after-shave, perfume or lotion is prohibited, as others may have allergic reactions.

Subject to the following, jewelry is allowed as long as it does not interfere with driving the vehicle or pose a safety issue. Men wearing earrings may wear stud and post type only. Women's earrings may not be longer than two inches below the earlobe. No body piercings are to be visible on body parts other than the ears while performing WPRTA duties.

- 4.4** Uniforms
Operators must be in complete uniform and ready to work at their report times. WPRTA uniforms are to be worn only while at work, or while going to or coming from work. A brief stop between work and home is allowed. Operators are not to consume or purchase alcohol while in uniform.

Prior to uniform distribution operators must wear a dark green shirt and khaki dress or cargo pants/shorts. The shirt must be free of logo's (i.e., alcohol, tobacco, etc).

Uniforms will be issued to full and part time operators. Operators will not be

issued a uniform until the probation period is complete. At an operator's expense he or she may purchase additional approved shirts, pants/shorts and jackets. Operators will replace at their own expense any/all uniform pieces that are damaged by the operator. WPRTA will replace issued items on an as needed basis.

The basic uniform consists of the following regulation items: WPRTA approved pants, hat, shirts and jacket; and operator provided belt, shoes, appropriate undergarments, socks and shorts.

- The belt will be black or brown and must be free of unnecessary adornment.
- Shorts must be knee length or longer.
- Shoes must be black or brown, polishable, closed-toe, and low or flat-heeled. No canvas shoes, deck shoes, or high heels. For safety reasons, platform shoes, heels over two inches high, open toes or open heels, moccasins, sandals, house slippers, clogs or other similar casual footwear are not permitted. Shoes should provide enough traction to allow moving wheelchairs without slipping or sliding. All shoes must meet WPRTA approval. Athletic shoes with logos or shoes that are more than one color are not authorized.
- Socks should be solid black or white and must be worn at all times.
- Black suspenders are permitted. Suspenders must not have logos or messages that are offensive and must be worn as an addition to the belt.
- Undershirts, t-shirts, and/or other undergarments should be white, green or black in color. No writing, graphics, slogans, logos or other similar types of images should be visible through the green uniform shirt from the undergarment.

4.5 Jackets or other outerwear should be WPRTA approved apparel. If weather conditions dictates that you wear additional clothing for warmth, any non-approved clothing should be worn underneath the WPRTA approved shirt. Operators must dress for the weather conditions in a manner that still allows them to perform their duties. Remember that the key to staying warm is to stay dry and use layers of clothing.

4.6 Hats/caps if worn should be WPRTA approved apparel. If weather conditions dictate the use of hat/toboggans, knit "watch caps," rain hats, etc. these must be black, khaki, or green in color and free of any writing graphics, slogans, logos or similar types of images. WPRTA will consider requests for religious accommodations to this uniform policy if reasonable accommodations are possible without imposing an undue hardship on WPRTA. Please forward any such requests in writing to the Manager of Operations.

4.7 Operators are authorized to modify their uniform in recognition of various

holidays. Participation is strictly optional. Holiday attire includes hats, sweaters, ties, socks, or costumes. Items worn must be in good taste and must not interfere with your vision or your ability to safely perform your duties.

- 4.8 All operators are required to wear their WPRTA picture identification badge at all times while performing WPRTA duties to identify themselves as WPRTA operators.
- 4.9 Only WPRTA patches, badges, or work related awards are allowed on WPRTA uniforms and hats.
- 4.10 Upon termination of employment whether voluntary or involuntary the WPRTA uniforms are to be turned in to the Manager of Operations or designee.

SECTION 5 Cellular Telephones and Texting

- 5.1 The Authority may provide cellular telephones to employees for business use when the use of such telephones will increase the level of service provided to the Authority's customers, increase the level of safety for the employee, and/or satisfy legal requirements.
- 5.2 Employees will use telephones responsibly and professionally. An Authority cellular telephone shall be used for appropriate business purposes, such as furthering Authority operations, when an Authority telephone is inaccessible or if the call cannot or should not wait until the employee has access to an Authority telephone. For example, when an Authority telephone is unavailable, an employee may use the cellular telephone to report emergency situations to appropriate authorities, using free cellular calls whenever possible, e.g., 911 or *HP.
- 5.3 When a regular telephone is inaccessible, an Authority cell phone may be used to notify family members that employee is working past normal working hours and his/her expected arrival time, and to report the health, safety and welfare of the employee after an accident on the job.
- 5.4 Employees shall know the allowable number of minutes assigned to them or their work group. Employees will take measures to insure minutes used are kept below the allowable assigned minutes whenever possible. (Example: checking voice mail messages from desk phones so as not to use minutes towards the cellular phones.)
- 5.5 *Personal Use*
Certain personal calls are permitted, but shall be kept to a minimum and may require reimbursement. Such permitted calls are for the well being of the employee or employee's family member or for personal business that requires immediate attention and the employee cannot otherwise use a regular telephone.

No other personal calls are permitted. Personal phone calls and text messages should not interrupt the daily operations of the Authority.

5.6 *Reimbursement*

Reimbursement in the amount per minute applicable at the time of use plus any other applicable charges shall be made by the employee in cash or personal check to the Authority to reduce the charges to the cellular telephone bill. Any required reimbursement is to be made by the employee to the Authority on a timely basis.

5.7 *Incoming Calls*

The Authority discourages the disclosure of cellular telephone numbers to the public. All incoming calls are discouraged unless the calls are part of the business operations of the employee and the Executive Director specifically directs the employee to encourage incoming calls for such purposes.

5.8 *Monitoring Usage by the Finance Director*

The Authority monitors cellular telephone use and charges. The Finance Director, or designee, reviews the detailed cellular telephone bill for the Authority each month for telephone usage patterns of employees. The Finance Director investigates any unusual or questionable patterns and takes appropriate action. The employee should take appropriate action to prevent damage and/or theft of the telephone equipment.

5.9 *Cellular Use While Operating WPRTA Vehicles*

WPRTA, or personal cell phones or other electronic devices are not to be used while operating an Authority vehicle. If these devices must be used, cease operation of the vehicle prior to use.

5.10 *Texting*

Texting while operating an Authority vehicle is strictly prohibited. If texting must be utilized, cease operation of the vehicle prior to use.

SECTION 6 **Emergency Situations**

6.1 The Operations Director is responsible for the Authority's response to emergency situations. Should the Director be unavailable, his or her designee shall be responsible.

6.2 Should inclement weather pose driving conditions that may be hazardous, the Operations Director may temporarily suspend scheduled transit service until the Director determines that the hazardous conditions have subsided.

6.3 Should an emergency situation warrant the need for the Authority to suspend or terminate service, employees will come under the direction of the appropriate County Emergency Operations Plan. The appropriate County Emergency

Operations Director or his or her designee will assume control of the Authority's operation and/or vehicles as mandated by the Plan.

SECTION 7 Financial Policies

- 7.1** In order to monitor fare receipts, it will be required that the Finance Director, or his authorized designee, reconcile the daily farebox cash receipts on a monthly basis. The audit will include the recovery of the cash from the fareboxes, the counting of cash receipts, the preparation of the daily cash deposit documents, and the actual procedure used to make the cash deposit. The original of the bank deposit receipt will be forwarded to the WPRTA and a copy maintained by any Management Contractor. The deposit receipts will be compared to the monthly bank account statement to verify the accuracy of the statement. On those days when the fareboxes are counted by representatives of any Management Contractor only, there should be two people present at all times during the cash counting procedure.
- 7.2** In order to document employee hours worked, it will be necessary to have each employee of the Authority to complete a timesheet for each pay period. The timesheet will indicate the number of hours worked for each day in the pay period. The timesheet will be signed by the employee and his/her supervisor at the end of each pay period. The timesheets will serve as the source documents to the payroll.
- 7.3** The Finance Director will be the designated recipient of all checks received by WPRTA. It will be the Finance Directors responsibility to maintain a log of checks received disclosing who the payment is received from, the date received and the amount of the check. It will be required that a deposit be made on a daily basis, during the normal work week, when cumulative receipts are in excess of \$250.00. A duplicate copy of the deposit slip will be maintained on file in the Finance Director's files. In those instances where cash or checks are being held for deposit, those items will be securely maintained in a locked file or safe. It will be necessary to deposit all funds received on the last workday of the month.
- 7.4** In the process of issuing checks for payments for goods and services on behalf of the WPRTA, it will be necessary to have authorized signatures on the checks. Those signatures will be that of the Finance Director and the Executive Director of the WPRTA. However, in the event that the Director is unavailable to sign the checks the Deputy Finance Officer (if any) is authorized to sign the checks. The disbursement checks will be maintained in a secure area and controlled by an individual not involved in the printing or signing of checks. The control will include a numerical record of the checks disbursed for use. The record will be compared to the beginning check number and those used to determine a complete accounting for all checks.

- 7.5** The WPRTA Finance Director is the designated recipient of bank statements and cancelled checks. The check reconciliation will also be performed by the Finance Director. The reconciliation will be reviewed and approved by the WPRTA Executive Director. For checks that are shown to be outstanding for more than 90 days, it will be necessary to contact the check recipient to request that the check be presented for payment.
- 7.6** A petty cash fund will be established in the amount of \$250.00. This fund will be used to provide money for incidental goods and services that are required in a timely manner. The fund will be maintained by the Finance Director or designee. In order to be reimbursed from the petty cash fund, a petty cash voucher will have to be completed and signed by the person requesting the reimbursement. It will be necessary to perform an accounting of the petty cash fund on a weekly basis. The funds on hand will be counted. The total of petty cash vouchers will be determined. The total of cash on hand plus the total of the petty cash vouchers will be compared to the total authorized petty cash fund. The total of the two should be equal to the authorized amount in the petty cash fund.

7.6.1 Credit Card Use Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this Credit Card Policy is to facilitate purchases necessary for WPRTA operation, lodging and travel to approved functions, and to facilitate other necessary transactions where use of a credit card would expedite the transaction in an efficient manner. The purpose of the use of these cards is not to override the procedures set forth WPRTA's Procurement Policy, but to provide an alternative method of purchase for necessary goods and services.

Policies

1. The Finance Director shall be responsible for the issuance, accounting, monitoring, retrieval and general oversight of compliance with this Credit Card Policy.
2. Credit cards shall not be issued to any individual staff member. However the following employees are authorized users of the credit card: Executive Director, Finance Director, Planning Director, Maintenance Director, Operations Director, Marketing Manager and Accounting Manager.
3. Credit cards may be used for any authorized WPRTA purchase where the vendor or merchant accepts credit card payments.
4. WPRTA only maintains one credit card (Visa or Mastercard) and the credit card shall have an authorized maximum limit of up to \$5,000.
 - a. If a card user experiences denials when using the WPRTA credit card, the

employee shall notify the Finance Director as soon as possible with details of the denial. Such details shall include, but not be limited to, vendor or merchant name, date, time and details of transaction, and dollar amount. The Finance Director shall investigate the denial.

- b. The WPRTA credit cards are to remain in a locked fire box in the WPRTA safe, except at times when checked out for use.
-
5. The Finance Administrator or the Payroll Administrator maintains a log of credit card check out from the safe. The authorized user must sign and date the log when the credit card is been taken from the safe then again sign and date when the card is returned. The Finance Administrator collects from the user the credit card receipts at the time of the return of the card and places the receipts in a proper file for reconciliation by the Accounting Manager when credit card invoices are received. WPRTA credit cards shall only be used for the purchases of goods and services that are the official business of the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority.
 6. Documentation detailing the goods and services purchased with WPRTA credit cards shall be required for all transactions. Adequate documentation shall consist of, but not be limited to, original sales receipts, credit slips, etc. At no time shall WPRTA approve payment of credit card invoices without adequate documentation. Documentation shall detail the goods or services purchased, the cost of the goods or services purchased, the date of the purchase and the official business for which the goods or services were purchased.
 7. WPRTA credit cards shall not be used for personal uses, personal cash advances, or other merchant category exclusions (i.e., alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, etc.).
 8. Any employee of the WPRTA who violates the provisions of this Credit Card Policy shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge and/or civil or criminal action.
 9. Employees to whom credit cards are checked out shall be responsible for the protection and custody of the credit card. The employee to whom credit cards are checked out shall immediately notify the financial institution issuing the card if lost or stolen, and the employee shall notify the Finance Director as soon as possible. Employees shall not knowingly post or otherwise make publicly available credit card data that could potentially result in fraud or unauthorized charges.
 10. Employees to whom credit cards are checked out shall return the card to the Finance Administrator by the end of the day or by the start of the next business day they return to work, if the card is used for travel or for after hours purchases.

Employees holding any cards must immediately surrender all WPRTA credit cards upon termination of employment or layoff from active work status if these events occur while they are in possession of a WPRTA credit card.

11. All benefits derived from the use of credit cards shall become the property of the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority.
12. The credit card shall not impact the cardholder's personal credit references. The WPRTA credit card is a WPRTA liability card, not a personal liability card. However, the cardholder does have the responsibility to use the credit card in an appropriate manner, as described in this document.
13. The Finance Director shall review and recommend approval or denial of credit card invoices prior to submission to the Accounting Manager of WPRTA for payment. The balance due on any credit card account shall be paid in full by the due date listed on the invoice but in no event later than sixty (60) days from the initial statement date.
14. Credit card transactions are hereby authorized for the following methods of acquisition:
 - a. In person: the employee shall present the credit card for purchases of goods and services. The employee shall obtain a receipt for all purchases and credits, and submit the receipt to the Finance Administrator and subsequently to the Accounting Manager for reconciliation with the credit card invoice.
 - b. Via telephone or mail order: the employee shall provide the vendor or merchant with the credit card number, expiration date, and other pertinent data necessary to complete the transaction. The employee shall take necessary precautions to ensure that the transaction is valid prior to providing pertinent credit card data. The employee shall properly document the transaction with a purchase order or other document and submit this documentation to the Accounting Manager for reconciliation with the credit card invoice.
 - c. Via the Internet: the employee shall provide the vendor or merchant with the credit card number, expiration date, and other pertinent data necessary to complete the transaction. The employee shall take necessary precautions to ensure that the transaction is valid prior to providing pertinent credit card data. The employee shall properly document the transaction with a purchase order, hardcopy screen printouts, and/or other document, and this documentation shall be submitted to the Finance Administrator and subsequently to the Accounting Manager for reconciliation with the credit card invoice.

- 7.7** The Authority will employ the services of an outside Certified Public Accountant (CPA) on an annual basis to perform an independent audit. The scope of the audit, at a minimum, should include such tests of the accounting records and such other procedures as are considered by the auditor to be necessary in the circumstances. The audit should include a review of the internal control system of the unit. His review will take place as soon as practicable after the close of each fiscal year.
- 7.8** The WPRTA has established a level of \$5,000.00 for capitalizing items such as equipment. It will be necessary to capitalize all expenditures for land and buildings regardless of acquisition cost.
- 7.9** The WPRTA will maintain property records for all fixed assets. These records will reflect a description of the property; a serial number or some other unique identification number; the date acquired; the cost of acquisition; the accumulated amount of depreciation; the residual value after depreciation; date and method of disposal; and sales price (if any) at disposal. A physical inventory of the fixed assets should be conducted and documented at a minimum of every two years. Equipment records must be retained for at least three (3) years after disposition.
- 7.10** The WPRTA will allocate common costs between the fixed route activity and the paratransit activity based upon the most current cost allocation study. For those costs that can be readily identified as applicable to a specific activity they will be charged directly to that activity.
- 7.11** Client agencies are billed by the tenth working day of each month. Payment in full is due within 30 days of billing. The billings will be prepared by the Finance Manager.
- 7.12** NCDOT reimbursement requests are filed at the direction of the Finance Director. The WPRTA will submit a request for advance payment for high cost capital items, e.g., vehicles and computer systems. The request will be submitted with a cover letter on WPRTA letterhead. The required reimbursement request form along with a copy of the vendor's invoice will be included. Also, included will be an original "Advance Payment Certification" form with the original signature. Additionally, a copy of the order form sent to the vendor to generate the purchase and when appropriate a copy of the vehicle title application will be submitted as well. It will be WPRTA's responsibility to deposit the advance payment into its bank account upon receipt and payment issued to the vendor within three (3) business days.
- 7.13** *Depreciation Schedule*
The Western Piedmont Transit Authority will depreciate capital assets based on

the following schedule:

<u>Asset Class</u>	<u>Estimated useful life</u>
Buildings and improvements	20 years
Buses:	
Large, heavy-duty bus (35' – 40')	12 years/500,000 miles
Medium-sized, heavy duty small bus (30')	10years/350,000 miles
Medium-sized, medium-duty buses (30')	7 years/200,000 miles
Medium-size, light-duty buses (25' – 35')	5 years/150,000 miles
Light duty small bus and modified van	5 – 7 years/100,000 miles
Other:	
Non revenue vehicles	5 years
Furniture, fixtures, machinery and equipment	5 – 10 years

Revenue vehicles will be depreciated in accordance with the Federal Transit Administration Altoona test guidelines (see table). Revenue vehicles will be considered fully depreciated once either their useful life in years expires or they reach the mileage listed for full depreciation.

Category	Typical Characteristics				Minimum Life	
	Length	Approx. GVW	Seats	Average Cost	(Whichever comes first)	
					Years	Miles
Heavy-Duty Large Bus	35 to 48 ft and 60 ft artic.	33,000 to 40,000	27 to 40	\$325,000 to over \$600,000	12	500,000
Heavy-Duty Small Bus	30 ft	26,000 to 33,000	26 to 35	\$200,000 to \$325,000	10	350,000
Medium-Duty and Purpose-Built Bus	30 ft	16,000 to 26,000	22 to 30	\$75,000 to \$175,000	7	200,000
Light-Duty Mid-Sized Bus	25 to 35 ft	10,000 to 16,000	16 to 25	\$50,000 to \$65,000	5	150,000
Light-Duty Small Bus, Cutaways, and Modified Van	16 to 28 ft	6,000 to 14,000	10 to 22	\$30,000 to \$40,000	4	100,000

Revenue vehicles will be depreciated using the straight-line method. Vehicles that are to be retired before their useful life expires will be depreciated based on a method of vehicle cost divided by the number of years of useful life remaining on the vehicle.

7.14 Financial Records Retention Policy - Record Retention and Access

Financial records, supporting documents, statistical records, and all other records pertinent to a Federal/State grant shall be retained for a period of (at least) five years after receipt of final payment.

Records will be maintained intact and readily accessible and include all data, documents, reports, records, contracts, and supporting materials relating to grant projects as the Federal/State government may require during the course of the project and for five years after final payment is issued.

If any litigation, claim, or audit is started before the expiration of the 5-year period, the records shall be retained until all litigation, claims or audit findings involving the records have been resolved and final action taken.

Records for real property and equipment acquired with Federal/State funds shall be retained for 5 years after final disposition or for 5 years after useful service life is met, whichever comes first.

The Authority is required to permit, upon request, and require its Contractors to permit, the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, the Comptroller General of the United States, and, to the extent appropriate, the State, or their authorized representatives, to inspect all grant project work, materials, payrolls, and other data, and to audit the books, records, and accounts of the Agency and its Contractors pertaining to the grant project.

More detailed information on record retention requirements can be found by following the link below:

http://www.records.ncdcr.gov/local/publicTransporationSystems_2006.pdf

7.14.1 Procedures for Safe-Guarding Van and Bus Tickets/Passes

Van Tickets

1. Van tickets are pre-numbered and the inventory is stored in a locked file cabinet in the finance office with the primary responsibility of ticket sales and inventory performed by the Finance Administrator and Accounting Manager.
2. When a driver, lead driver or driver supervisor requests tickets for sale; the number of tickets along with the individual ticket numbers and date is written down on the sign-out sheet by the Finance Administrator.
3. The driver or driver supervisor initials the sign-out sheet stating that the information is correct and that they did receive what is stated.
4. Lead drivers in the satellite offices maintain a listing of the inventory of tickets received from finance or from the driver supervisor.
5. The driver supervisory maintains a listing of inventory in his/her possession for future distribution to drivers in Catawba County or lead drivers in the satellite offices.
6. The driver supervisor stores issued tickets in a locked cash box.
7. Lead drivers in the satellite offices store the tickets in a locked cash box and keep a small inventory of less than 100 tickets on site.
8. The lead drivers in the satellite offices maintain a log of the inventory, writing down the number of tickets and ticket numbers received from the driver supervisor or finance office.
9. The lead driver enters into the log all distributions of tickets to individual drivers, listing the numbers of the tickets distributed to each individual driver.
10. The driver is required to sign for the receipt of all tickets requested.

11. As drivers sell tickets to passengers, the information and ticket numbers, along with the monies received from the sales are reported on the driver's daily fare and ticket sales report and reconciliation sheet.
12. This report is turned in daily to the finance office and the data is captured showing the ticket sales by each driver, and is reconciled to the cash turned in by the driver.
13. The driver supervisor and/or Operations Director is notified of any discrepancies of cash for ticket sales by drivers.
14. At the end of the month, the driver supervisor and lead drivers take a physical inventory of the tickets that have not been sold or redistributed and reconciles them to their individual logs.
15. Any discrepancies are reported to the driver supervisor, Operations Director and Accounting Manager.
16. The Accounting Manager also takes a physical inventory of unsold tickets located in the ticket office.
17. Accounting Manager then reconciles the physical overall inventory by starting with the beginning inventory of the month (which is ending inventory from the previous month) and adding in any new tickets acquired (printed) less tickets distributed to drivers, lead drivers and driver supervisor or those sold by finance to member agencies. This gives ending inventory which is then reconciled against the physical inventory.
18. The Accounting Manager reconciles the tickets sales activity to the cash receipts for ticket sales in the general ledger and prepares a ticket reconciliation report.
19. The reconciliation report is then reviewed and approved by the Finance Director.

Bus Tickets

1. Bus tickets are pre-numbered and are stored in a locked file cabinet in the finance office.
2. Less than 100 of these tickets of various denominations are also stored in the safe at the transit center (these are also pre-numbered).
3. Ticket sales are sold to agencies by the Finance Administrator and to individual by transit center supervisor.
4. Finance ticket sales are tracked by invoice and by a point of sale cash register for transit center ticket sales.
5. Daily the transit center staff completes a report for the tickets and forwards cash and receipts to the Finance Department.
6. The Accounting Manager then reconciles the cash register cash receipts of tickets sold.
7. The Accounting Manager enters the amounts of ticket sales as

8. cash deposit and ticket sales income into the general ledger.
8. Any discrepancies or non-reconciliations between inventory and cash are reported to the Finance Director and the Operations Director.
9. At the end of the month a physical inventory is taken of the tickets stored in both the finance department and the transit center by the Accounting Manager.
10. The Accounting Manager then reconciles the physical inventory in the finance by starting with the beginning inventory of the month (which is ending inventory from the previous month) and adding in any new tickets acquired by finance less tickets distributed to the transit center or tickets sold by finance staff to member agencies. This gives ending inventory which is then reconciled against the physical inventory and a bus pass reconciliation report is prepared.
11. The reconciliation report is then reviewed and approved by the Finance Director.

7.15 Fare Policy

The purpose of this Fare Policy is to establish guidelines for setting and/or restructuring public transit fares for The Authority. This policy includes:

- Fare Policy Goals: describing the overall intent of this policy;
- Fare Payment: including the types of fare media and passes that will be used;
- Fare Structure: establishing full fares and discounts for various services and ridership groups;
- Fare Box Return: determines the portion of operating costs that will be supported by users of the system;
- Public Notice and Solicitation of Comment: outlining the procedures that will be used to ensure adequate public input is provided to support decisions regarding fares.

The goal of this Fare Policy is to identify a prudent balance between the various factors influencing public transit. The policy is also intended to support the Authority's mission to identify and safely meet the mobility needs of the region with a courteous, dependable and environmentally sound commitment to quality service.

The Authority has established the following Fare Policy Objectives that are considered necessary for achieving the Fare Policy Goal. The objectives are classified as those that focus on consumer issues and those that support business related matters. The nature of these objectives reflects the desire to develop a Fare Structure that balances affordability for our customers with the need to generate sufficient fare revenue to help maintain and expand transit operations.

- a. Increase Utilization of Public Transportation
As a mobility manager, The Authority exists to provide transportation

solutions that meet the mobility needs of the public. Our success in this regard, is reflected through increases in ridership. Increased use of public transit also supports the broad social efforts of improving economic competitiveness, ensuring a reasonable quality of life for residents, reducing traffic congestion and decreasing air pollution. It is, therefore, important to adopt fare strategies that will encourage ridership by making public transit more attractive and convenient to use.

b. Establish Equitable Support from Local Interests

The Authority realizes the benefits of providing accessible transportation options to its customers. To ensure a level of equity, fares must take into account the needs of various populations of users. To this extent, a fare structure should be established that supports, encourages and enables travel choices for our most dependent customer. In addition, The Authority has an obligation to be responsible to the tax payers of the region that help fund the system. Equity between users and non-users that help support the system must be considered when determining fare policies.

c. Enhance Mobility & Access

The fare payment system should enhance the ability of riders to access the system and move through it with ease. To do so, the fare structure should be easy to understand. It should also provide adequate choices for customers to select the payment option that suits their travel needs.

d. Maintain/Increase Fare Revenue Stream

Fare revenue includes both individual passenger fares collected and revenues from agency service contracts. Any increase or restructuring of fares should ensure that the total fare revenue stream is maintained at an appropriate level to meet the economic needs of the system.

e. Increase the Efficiency of Fare Revenue Collection

To improve efficiencies, a fare collection system should reduce opportunities for fare abuse, minimize the costs associated with fare collection and reduce the associated administrative costs. The Authority can accomplish this by taking advantage of developments in fare collection technologies.

f. Streamline Fare Structure

A fare structure should be established that minimizes fare categories to eliminate confusion between the customers and The Authority staff. In addition, fare collection should allow drivers to easily regulate the policy and expedite the boarding process.

Fare Payment

Based on the existing equipment available on The Authority vehicles, the following fare payment options will be available for use on the fixed route and

Dial-A-Ride system:

- Day passes will be issued from the fare box equipment located on-board the fixed route vehicles.
- Cash fare payment will be accepted on-board fixed route and Dial-A-Ride vehicles.
- Miscellaneous coupons and passes may also be introduced periodically as part of a special promotion or service. These will generally be specially printed fare passes associated with a specific event and will only be accepted during a limited time span.
- Passes will be sold at the WPRTA the Authority's administrative facility and additional pass sales outlets will be established at various locations throughout the service area, including the new Downtown Hickory Transit Terminal.

Fare Structure

The Authority currently serves a primarily transit dependent population. The fare prices are developed with sensitivity to the needs of the transit ridership and with particular consideration of specific subgroups. The following fare types will be used to encourage ridership:

- Fixed Route Full Fare: A full fare price will be established for adult passengers boarding a fixed route vehicle.
- Fixed Route Reduced Fare: As required by the Federal Transit Administration, reduced fares will be no more than 50% of the full fare option for fixed route riders. Reduced fares will be offered for seniors, and persons with a disability and Medicare card holders. Reduced fare options apply to fixed route service only.
- Free Service: The Authority will allow fare free boarding on the fixed route service for children under age 6 as long as they are accompanied by a fare paying customer.
- Multi-Ride Passes: multi-ride passes will be established for time periods that offer a variety of options for The Authority customers. The price of each pass will be set at a level that offers a discount to the customer over the full fare. At a minimum, The Authority will offer an all day pass and a 30-day pass.
- Promotional Fares: The Authority has the option to offer deeply discounted fares or free service to promote or celebrate special occasions. The intent of these events is to encourage new riders, reward existing riders and to promote or recognize specific services. Promotional fare programs require Board approval and should be limited so that lost revenue does not exceed 5% of the overall fare box return.
- Emergency Conditions Fares: Under special emergency conditions and at the direction of executive management The Authority may suspend fares altogether to address the emergency evacuation and/or movement of residents and visitors, as well as in supporting regional emergency needs.

Fare Box Return

Fare revenues are the predominant local funding source used to support public transit operations in the region. A smaller share of local revenues comes from local government. Fare box return, which is the fare revenue collected expressed as a percentage of total operating expenditures, is influenced by several factors including the overall ridership on the system and the fare structure as outlined in the previous section. To ensure consistent decision-making is applied over time, The Authority will:

- Monitor the overall local funds required to match with State and Federal grants and fare box return annually. Present this information during the budget development and review process.
- Monitor efficiency of the operations.
- Establish route productivity goals such as passengers per hour and will monitor the service to ensure these goals are met.
- Target the overall fare box return rate (passenger fares and contract revenues) to approximately 25% for the overall system (bus and Dial-A-Ride).
- Initiate discussions to review the fare structure and adjust fares for passengers and client agencies during the budget process, any time one or more of the following criteria are met:
 - The fare box recovery ratio for the upcoming year will fall below 25%;
 - There are insufficient local funds to match with required State and/or Federal funding programs, or
 - A drawdown on the operating reserve will be required to balance the budget.
- Periodically reassess the overall fare box return target.

The Authority recognizes the value of setting a threshold for fare recovery. However, the agency also recognizes that a base recovery standard that is set too high may limit the ability to introduce new services. Given this balance of system performance and policy oriented decisions, the The Authority Board of Directors reserves the option for flexibility in responding to actual market conditions, community needs, and service when the fare box returns are reported.

Fare Change Process and Public Comment Considerations

A comprehensive public outreach effort is essential to ensure that the decisions being made about transit fares reflect the needs and desires of the community. A well rounded public involvement effort consists of notifying the public as well as soliciting feedback regarding the proposed changes. The Authority will include the following activities when a determination is made to institute a fare change:

- a. Public Notice Procedures: At a minimum, The Authority will place legal advertisements in local newspapers to announce the proposed fare changes and describe how the public may provide comment. The

Authority will also prepare notices in the form of press releases and provide written notices on-board buses. Posting information on the Authority web site; notifying agency and business partners directly via e-mail or facsimile; and participating in interviews with local newspaper, radio, or television programs to reach additional audiences.

- b. Solicitation of Public Comment Practices: To ensure public comment is considered, The Authority will schedule public meetings to gather input during the development of a fare change proposal. A formal public hearing will also be scheduled during a regularly scheduled Board meeting. Additional efforts may include placing comment forms on-board buses and posting comment forms on the Authority website. The Authority staff will document all comments and suggestions submitted during this period.
- c. Implementation: As a part of the process, The Authority will also develop an implementation plan for proposed fare changes. The plan will outline ongoing public outreach and education needed to ensure a smooth transition.

Glossary

Within the context of this policy, the following definitions apply:

- Children: Any person under 6 years of age.
- Fixed Route: A bus route designed to operate using a predetermined path and time schedule.
- Dial-A-Ride Service: curb-to-curb service offered to the general public, senior citizens and disabled persons.
- Senior Citizen: Any person age 65 or older.
- Disabled: Any person with a documented disability as classified under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Total Operating Cost: all operating costs, including administrative costs.
- Fare Revenues: Fares paid by individual riders and revenues collected through fare subsidy agreements with private parties or social service agencies.

7.16 Reserve Policy

The objective of the reserve policy is to provide adequate working capital for cash flow and contingency purposes, and to ensure there are adequate matching funds for major capital projects, while maintaining reasonable fares and member match requirements.

To achieve this, the Authority will establish separate operating and capital reserve funds, as discussed below:

Operating Reserves

The goal of the Authority is to maintain a minimum unallocated fund balance to be used for cash flow purposes, unanticipated expenditures of a non-recurring nature, or to meet unexpected increases in service delivery costs. This fund should be in an amount equal to three months operating expenses or

approximately \$1 million, by June 2012. To the extent that the need for additional contingencies exist as a result of state or federal funding uncertainties, or other factors, the Board may elect to maintain a balance larger than this minimum amount.

Sources – This fund will include the carryover of unallocated reserve revenues from the FY 2009 budget, annual contributions from operating surpluses, a portion of member agency match (when contribution levels allow), interest earnings, and any new dedicated transit funding that may become available.

Capital Reserves

This reserve is for major capital procurements, including such things as bus replacement and facility modifications or construction. Routine capital replacements are covered by the existing local match. To allow for the replacement of the existing 5 diesel buses with hybrid electric technology in approximately 10 years, a total of at least \$30,000 a year needs to be set aside for bus replacement. It is expected that there will additional facility costs in the future, but these are not yet known.

Sources – This fund can begin to be established by dedicating advertising revenues, vehicle sales revenues, and other dedicated transit funds should they become available. In addition to these revenues, a special capital component could be added to the annual member match in selected years or a separate capital set aside fund could be established by member agencies as a means of developing their share of the fleet replacement cost.

Reporting and Use of Reserve Funds

At the end of each fiscal year the Finance Director shall audit the Operating and Capital reserve funds and report the balances as part of the year end-audit process. Funds may not be taken out of this fund or transferred to other accounts without Board approval.

7.17 Mail Opening

Finance Administrator:

1. Receives and opens all incoming mail, *except* the bank statements.
2. The Finance Administrator does not initiate or post journal entries.

7.18 Budget Policy and Procedures

I. BACKGROUND

This policy outlines the procedure for budget development, monitoring and approval process. This policy also provides information on the role that executives and staff play in developing the budget.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of the budget policy is to create stability and consistency. With direction from the Board of Directors, the Executive Director is responsible for the implementation and continuity of the budget cycle.

III. POLICY AND PROCEDURE

A) Time line

Months Before/After Start of Budget Year	Activities
7 Months Before (November)	Finance Director kicks-off budget process with management team <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify key projects and issues for upcoming yearDevelop initial service and cost forecasts and assumptions.
6 Months Before (December)	Brief Board on the budget process and status
5 Months Before (January)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Finalize service level assumptionsBegin developing first draft of proposed budgetProvide an update to the Board on the progress and issues
4 Months Before (February)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review revenue assumptionsReview and make adjustments to proposed budgetInternal review of first draft of proposed budgetComplete proposed budgetReview proposed budget with BoardSet public hearing dateUse input from Board to finalize proposed budgetIssue public hearing notice
3 Months Before (March)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Update Finance CommitteePublic Hearing and Board Adoption
6 Months After (December)	Mid-year budget adjustments to adjust revenue and expenditures based on recent changes and confirmed grant information.
11 Months After (June)	Final line item adjustments based on monitoring information.

B) Budget Development

- The Executive Director and Department Directors meet and establish budget priorities and discuss related financial issues.
- Finance Director develops expenditure forecast based on existing activities, known cost increases, and any known changes in operations.
- Director of Grants and Planning, working with the Finance Director, develops a revenue forecast for the upcoming year.

- Facility and Fleet Maintenance Director and IT Coordinator (Marketing Manager) works with Department Directors to develop input into the capital budget.
- Department Directors review staffing levels and positions within their area and submit proposals for change to the Authority's Human Resources Officer (Operations Director)
- The Executive Director and Department Directors meet to discuss the budget input and prioritize projects and program changes, as well as any other actions necessary to develop a balanced budget (e.g. fare changes, member match increases, deferring capital projects, cancelling programs, service level or staffing changes etc).
- The initial draft budget goes to the Finance Committee and is modified, if necessary, before going to the Board for review at their February meeting.
- After the initial Board review, the draft budget is finalized and a public hearing is scheduled and a final proposed budget and ordinance is prepared for approval in March.

C) Approval Process

- The WPRTA Board Finance Committee, in consultation with the Executive Director, will prepare a budget for the following fiscal year in accordance with the schedule identified in Article III, Sections A and B.
- On a quarterly basis, the Director of Finance will present the Board with a fiscal report on expenditures, revenues and key budget indicators.
- The annual budget, mid-year budget revisions, quarterly budget/ fiscal reports and emergency expenditures require the approval of the WPRTA Board are to be recorded in the meeting minutes.
- The approval of the budget and the approval of any change to the total expenditure level in the budget or to the program of projects requires a public hearing.
- The Executive Director, with oversight of the Finance Director, is responsible for maintaining a balanced budget.

D) Budget Monitoring

- On a monthly basis actual versus budgeted revenues and expenses are reported.
- On a quarterly basis, budget progress reports are provided to the Board of Directors.
- The books are closed within 60 days of the end of the Fiscal Year for audit purposes.
- Financial audits are conducted at the close of each fiscal year and the audit findings are presented to the Board of Directors at one of their regular meetings and submitted to the Local Government Commission within four months of the close of the Fiscal Year.

7.19 Check Acceptance Policy

We gladly accept personal checks for payment when presented with state-issued photo id. We cannot accept checks without a preprinted name and address (starter or counter checks) or checks with an expiration date (credit card account checks).

7.20 Returned Check Policy

If a check is returned by a financial institution for any reason, WPRTA will charge and bill the presenter of the check a \$35 fee. The presenter of the returned check will be ineligible to ride on the WPRTA system until all check charges/fees assessed are paid in full. WPRTA will not accept a

check from anyone who has previously presented two or more checks that were returned for any reason. Checks returned for any reason and not paid in full within 14 days of notification may result in the incident being submitted to the Catawba County District Attorney's Worthless Check Program or Magistrate for criminal prosecution as specified by North Carolina General Statutes.

7.21 Volume Ticket Discount

Discount for Bus and "Flex Route" Volume Ticket Purchases	
Discount Rate	Number Purchased in a Single Transaction
10%	100-499
15%	500-999
20%	1,000+

SECTION 8 Procurement

8.1 The Manager of Marketing is the Authority's Procurement Officer and shall coordinate the purchase of supplies, goods and services for the Authority and be responsible for maintaining and administering the Authority's Procurement Procedures.

8.2 Management Contractors (if any) to the Authority are authorized to make reimbursable purchases for the Authority in accordance with the Management Agreement. All purchases made with Authority funds or reimbursable to the Authority will follow procedures in the Authority's Purchasing Manual. With the exception of fuel, oil and utility payments, any Independent Contractors are not authorized to incur reimbursable expenses in excess of \$1,000.00 without prior approval from the Authority Director. The Director is authorized by this policy to enter into contractual agreements on behalf of the Authority up to \$5,000.00 annually per contract.

8.3 It will be necessary to complete a requisition form to procure supplies and equipment. The requisition form will be signed by the individual making the request and his/her supervisor. For those purchases made by WPRTA directly, e.g., capital purchases (vehicles, etc.) and other incidental requirements, it will also be necessary to complete a purchase requisition. The requisition should indicate the reason for the purchase, e.g., office supplies, etc. This requisition will have to be properly completed and approved by the Finance Director or designee. This purchase requisition will be used to generate a purchase authorization for the item. The purchase requisition should be maintained on file to substantiate the issuance of the purchase authorization form.

8.4 It will be necessary for a WPRTA or Management Contractor representative to sign for goods and services that have been purchased. This will provide

documentation that the goods and services have actually been received. Goods received shall be compared to invoice prior to approval for payment.

- 8.5** A copy of the Authority's Procurement Policy is located on the shared drive in the WPRTA Policies folder. Employees with procurement related questions should refer to the policy or contact the Manager of Marketing.

SECTION 9 Meetings of the Authority

- 9.1** The Authority is responsible for scheduling meetings. The Authority will meet no less than four times per year on a quarterly basis. A majority of the members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business and an affirmative vote of the majority of the members present at a meeting of the Authority shall be required to constitute action of the Authority. Meetings of the Authority are governed by NCGS §143 Article 33C.
- 9.2** "Robert's Rules of Order," as revised, shall govern the conduct of the meetings of the Authority whenever specific provisions of the North Carolina General Statutes or the Interlocal Agreements are not applicable. Privilege of the floor at meetings of the Authority shall be governed by the presiding officer.

SECTION 10 Route Design, Amenities, & Reductions in Service

10.1 Route Design Standards

- Routes shall be designed as direct as possible. Route deviations may be used to serve major travel generations where no other cost effective service option exists.
- Routes should be operated only over paved streets, which have at least 10 ft. travel lanes. Every effort shall be made to operate on streets without hazardous conditions such as steep grades or parked vehicles, which reduce roadway passage to less than 10 ft.
- In all cases, safety considerations shall prevail in the final determinations of route design.
- Scheduled arrival and departure times for routes having common transfer points will be coordinated to the maximum extent feasible. Every effort shall be made to keep the wait time between the bus transfers to a minimum.

- 10.2** The Western Piedmont Regional Transportation Authority Operations Director is authorized to approve temporary route modifications due to streets construction, detours, and/or appropriate safety related reasons.

- 10.3** Bus stops are normally located every 1,500 feet in residential areas (approx. eleven per mile). Stops shall be delineated by at least a sign on a pole, with the sign designed to provide identification as a bus stop.

10.4 Passenger Amenities and Shelters

The placement of passenger support facilities shall conform to the following

criteria:

- Facilities will be placed only at locations where physical site conditions allow their development.
- Facilities may be placed along major thoroughfares or within residential neighborhoods. Proposed facilities must be compatible with the environment
- Priority for the installation of facilities shall normally be based upon the number of daily boardings with special consideration given for elderly and handicapped passengers.
- Trash facilities shall be installed with shelters and benches when the right-of-way permits.

10.5 Passenger Benches

- Benches may be installed at locations with a minimum of 5 persons boarding per day
- Locations that meet shelter installation criteria, but physical site conditions prevent shelter installation; passenger benches with adequate seating may be considered

10.6 The Transit Route Committee will consider all changes to bus routes. The route committee chair will present any changes to the Authority for approval, if more than 25% of the route is affected by the changes. All new service, route extensions, or modifications should operate for a minimum of six (6) months. They will be evaluated at the end of three (3) and five (5) month periods and a recommendation shall be made by the Route Committee to continue, modify, or remove the service. New/ modified route service should meet at least one of the following criteria in order to be evaluated by the Transit route committee:

- Studies indicate that the proposed service would not substantially duplicate existing service except where certain route segments must coincide to reach major destination points.
- Projected ridership of more than ten (10) passengers per proposed vehicle hour of service.
- Projected ridership would average more than one passenger per mile of service.
- New service area should have a minimum average density of 500 persons per square mile in residential areas.
- High activity centers with 100,000 square feet of retail and/or 500 employees.
- A written request from the general public outlining the proposed service route, and a petition with at least fifty (50) signatures.
- Areas where the location of transit service is pursuant to city and county growth goals.
- Staff recommendation with present planning and passenger data of new

service area.

The committee will make its decision based upon staff recommendations, planning documentation, available funding, and public comments.

The committee will present its findings along with an Annual Report of services, ridership, costs, and overall performance to the Board. The Board may hold Public Hearings concerning any proposed actions. Public Hearings will be held in conformance with state and federal law, rules and/or regulations for new route approval, cancellation of existing routes, substantial modification (more than 25% of miles) of existing routes or fare changes.

Following the decision of the Board, notice of the service change will be posted prominently on all revenue vehicles servicing the route. The Authority's website will also advertise the service change. The advertisement period will be no less than fourteen (14) days. Alternate trip planning assistance (e.g. schedule assistance, bus route information, etc...) will be made available to passengers affected by any service changes.

- 10.7** The Authority will not operate services on private property without a properly signed Indemnity and Hold Harmless Agreement approved by the Board.

SECTION 11 Alternate Fuel Policy

The purpose of the Alternate Fuel Policy is to provide the Authority with practical guidelines for taking active steps toward achieving a cleaner environment and providing a leadership role in the local region. By encouraging use of alternative fuels and participating in development of the infrastructure necessary to create viable alternatives to gasoline and diesel powered engines, the Authority can assist the region in achieving improved air quality and energy independence.

It is the policy of the Authority to assume a proactive role in developing improved air quality and energy independence. Those proactive actions shall include but are not limited to:

- Reducing vehicle exhaust emissions through use of cleaner alternative fuels where practical and fiscally responsible opportunities arise;
- Forming partnerships with other agencies to promote clean air programs and activities;
- Utilizing available incentives to offset extraordinary costs of conversion to alternatively fueled vehicles and construction of supporting infrastructure, which provide not only reduced emissions, but also provide visible examples of practical alternatives for local fleet operators and individual vehicle owners;
- Converting all elements of the Authority fleet to clean alternative fuels wherever technology exists for proven, practical, and fiscally viable vehicles; and

- Working toward fuel independence by developing local fuel resources in lieu of dependence upon imported fuels.

The Board will direct those departments involved in procurement of motive equipment to consider this policy in specifications for vehicle purchases where proven, practical technology exists which will reduce exhaust emissions and improve fuel independence.

SECTION 12 Dial-A-Ride Policies

It is the policy of Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority to provide complementary paratransit (ADA) service in the cities where fixed route service is offered, flex route service in the cities of Conover, Hickory, and Newton, and the Town of Taylorsville, demand response (general public) service in the counties of Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba, and Agency contracted van service.

This document is available on the web at www.mygreenway.org. This document may also be obtained in other formats by contacting the WPRTA Scheduling Center at 828-464-9444 or 7-1-1 or 1-877-735-8200 for Relay.

12.1 Complementary Paratransit (American with Disabilities Act)

Complementary Paratransit Description of Service

WPRTA complementary paratransit service offers curb to curb transportation within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the fixed-route bus service to passengers who have a disability that prevents them from getting to a bus stop, getting onto the bus or understanding how to use the bus system. This service requires a passenger to fill out an ADA application and meet the eligibility requirements as established in the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Service Hours

WPRTA's complementary paratransit hours (excluding holidays) are:

Weekdays- 5:45 a.m. – 6:50 p.m. Saturdays- 8:45 a.m. – 4:50 p.m.

Currently there is no Sunday service.

Service is provided Monday through Saturday throughout the year, except for the following observed holidays.

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Martin Luther King Day
- Memorial Day

- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- Christmas Eve, Christmas and the day after Christmas

Service Parameters

Service is only provided inside the service area as defined by the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The area is defined as an area within 3/4 of a mile on either side of a fixed route service. Passengers previously certified through Piedmont Wagon prior to July 1, 2008 will continue to use the city limits of Hickory, Newton and Conover as their defined service area.

Eligibility / Certification Criteria for Complementary Paratransit

WPRTA utilizes the certification criteria as established in the ADA, as listed below:

1. Individuals cannot independently travel to/from fixed route stops within the service area.
2. Individuals could use an accessible fixed route vehicle, but the route that would be used is not accessible.
3. Individuals cannot independently navigate the system even though they can board the bus.

The application must be legible and properly completed. Also, the applicant must sign that the information given is correct and sign the release of information form which is included in the application. A health care provider must complete the attached physician form.

After the completed application is received, a WPRTA staff member will notify the applicant of the findings within 21 days.

Determination of Eligibility for Complementary Paratransit Service

WPRTA will determine eligibility status of a passenger based on the information provided during the eligibility process. A person may be determined to be ADA-eligible, temporarily ADA-eligible, or conditionally ADA-eligible on certain trips. Following the determination by WPRTA, the applicant will be notified of the findings. If the applicant disagrees with the findings, he/she may make a written request for an appeal of the decision. The appeal procedures will be sent to the applicant along with the determination of eligibility.

Renewal of Complementary Paratransit Certification Process

WPRTA will renew certification of all ADA-eligible passengers every two (2)

years.

PLEASE NOTE THAT WPRTA'S POLICY DOES NOT ALLOW AN OPERATOR TO LOSE VISUAL CONTACT WITH THE WPRTA VEHICLE.

Scheduling a Complementary Paratransit Trip

The complementary paratransit service is a shared ride, public transportation service. Requests for service may be made by calling the scheduling office at (828) 464-9444 during business hours on the preceding day that service is needed, however additional notice is recommended. Reservations may be made between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. Calls on Sunday will be received by an answering system.

Same day service requests are not available. The trip requests for both destination and return shall be scheduled at the time of the request.

Stop announcement

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that passenger information is provided in the form of fixed route stop announcements and route identification methods as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. U.S. Department of Transportation regulatory requirements for fixed route stop announcements and route identification are set forth in 49 CFR §37.167:

On fixed route systems, the WPRTA shall announce stops as follows:

1. The WPRTA shall announce at least transfer points with other fixed routes, other major intersections and destination points, and intervals along a route sufficient to permit individuals with visual disabilities to be oriented to their location.
2. The WPRTA shall announce any stop on request of an individual with a disability.
3. At the Greenway Transfer Center in Downtown City of Hickory, where WPRTA buses for more than one route serve the same stop, WPRTA shall provide a means by which an individual with a visual impairment or other disability can identify the proper vehicle to enter or be identified to the vehicle operator as a person seeking to ride on a particular route.

Fixed route bus operator

Operators should be trained on all the above, plus the following:

- An understanding that making stop announcements and providing route identification is an essential job function.
- Details of when, how and where stop announcements and route identifications are to be made.
- The importance of making announcements that are clear and audible throughout the vehicle. This should be ensured through:
 - testing stop announcement and route identification equipment as part of pre-trip inspections;
 - promptly reporting in-service equipment failure;
 - using equipment appropriately;
 - making voice announcements when the PA or automated system is not working;
 - Use of a current manual stop list consistent with any automated list of stop announcements;
 - Incentive programs and disciplinary actions for noncompliance.

Employees should sign an acknowledgment of receipt of training and agree to follow the established stop announcement and route identification program protocols.

Half-Fare Identification Card

The Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority fixed route bus service and flex routes offer a half-fare program for eligible persons with disabilities, elderly and individuals presenting a Medicare card. Eligibility criteria under this program is based on the following:

1. The Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) defines persons with disabilities as persons "who by reason of illness, injury, age, congenital malfunction, or other incapacity or temporary or permanent disability (including any individual who is a wheelchair user or has semi-ambulatory capabilities), cannot use effectively, without special facilities, planning, or design, mass transportation service or a mass transportation facility."
2. Elderly---Under FTA regulations, "elderly" at a minimum, include all persons 65 year of age or over.
3. Medicare Card---The half-fare ID card is available to any person presenting a Medicare card duly issued pursuant to Sections II and XVIII of the Social Security Act. It guarantees the holder eligibility under the Half-Fare program. As a proof of eligibility, it is distinct from eligibility as an elderly or person with disabilities.

The half fare is \$.60. A Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority photo ID card will be provided to all eligible applicants.

Individuals who have **permanent or temporary conditions that may not affect their ability to make effective use of WPRTA buses and facilities** may be determined to be **ineligible** to participate in the Half-Fare program.

These conditions include:

- Pregnancy
- Obesity
- Drug Addiction
- Some chronic heart or lung condition
- Loss of finger
- Contagious disease
- Controlled epilepsy
- Conditions which pose a danger to the individual or other passengers

The half-fare ID card can be obtained through the WPRTA Office, located at 1515 4th Street SW, Conover, NC 28613. Call the Customer Service Center at (828) 464-9444, TTD/TYY: (800) 735-2962 or 711 for additional information.

Trip Scheduling Information

Passengers who require trip scheduling or trip information may call the Scheduling office. When scheduling your trip for Complementary Paratransit, please have the following information ready:

1. Passenger name
2. Pick up address
3. Address of destination
4. Arrival time to destination
5. Approximate return trip request time
6. Type of assistance device, such as wheelchair, cane etc.
7. If a personal care attendant will accompany the passenger
8. If a service animal will accompany the passenger
9. If a guest will accompany the passenger

Trip Denials

A trip request may be denied for Demand Service if WPRTA is at full capacity or the time is not available to complete the trip as requested.

Trip requests for Complementary Paratransit will not be denied due to capacity constraints.

Subscription Service

A subscription trip for Complementary Paratransit is an ongoing reservation for a

specific day of the week (for example, to work, dialysis, physical therapy, merchants, community services etc.). It is useful to schedule a subscription trip when a passenger goes to the same place one or more days each week. Subscription trips allow a passenger to schedule all trip requests with one phone call. Please call our scheduling center during business hours to request a subscription trip. Subscription service is on a space available basis.

A passenger who cancels or changes a subscription trip more than 4 times in a calendar month, will lose the option of using subscription scheduling and will be asked to call in all trips on a daily basis no more than 48 hours in advance for a 30 day period.

Pick-Up and Drop Off

Passengers will receive a designated pick up time for all for Complementary Paratransit and Demand Response trips. The driver may arrive up to thirty (30) minutes after the designated pick up time. Please be ready and waiting in a place where you can hear or see the vehicle when it arrives. Drivers are not allowed to enter a residence or other facilities to look for passengers. To avoid delaying other passengers, drivers will only wait five (5) minutes before proceeding on their route.

The vehicle requires an obstruction-free approach and sufficient turn-around area for its vehicles. Under some conditions alternate pick-up and drop-off locations may be established because of obstructed driveways, turnarounds, or other safety concerns.

Passenger Assistance

Transportation service is provided by ADA accessible lift equipped vehicles for complementary paratransit and demand response trips. All operators are trained to provide reasonable assistance. Operators are Not trained to provide medical assistance.

Reasonable assistance includes:

- The operator will come to the curb of a residence or pick up location.
- The operator will attempt to notify passengers of arrival by sounding horn.
- The operator will assist passengers in boarding and exiting the van.
- The operator will deliver the passenger to the curb of his/her destination.
- Origin to Destination service is available upon request for Complementary Paratransit eligible passengers. Additional assistance will be provided to the door if Origin to Destination is requested.

- Assisting passengers up and/or down ramps at residence or destination if Origin to Destination is requested for Complementary Paratransit.

Reasonable assistance DOES NOT include:

- Assisting a passenger through the doorway or threshold of a residence.
- Assistance getting in or out of a wheelchair.
- Assistance in getting ready for the trip.
- Administering medication or oxygen.
- Assistance in carrying personal belongings or packages.
- Assisting passengers in wheelchairs up or down stairs that have more than one step.

WPRTA reserves the right to refuse passenger assistance to areas deemed unsafe by the Authority.

Complementary Paratransit Fares

The WPRTA Board of Directors establishes the fare for the complementary paratransit service. Fare must be paid upon each boarding by cash or ticket. Exact fare is required, operators cannot make change, Passengers may purchase ticket booklets from WPRTA operators. The current fares are as follows:

- \$2.50 per one way trip or one Dial-a-Ride ticket
- \$22.50 per booklet of Dial-a-Ride ticket Tickets (each booklet contains 10 tickets)

Car Seats

WPRTA requires the personal care attendant to provide an appropriate car seat for each child that requires a car seat. The proper use and installation of the Child Safety Restraint Seat is fully the responsibility of the accompanying adult. The selections and utilization of a Child Safety Restraint Seat must follow State and Federal Guidelines. A ride will not be provided for anyone violating this policy.

Car seats may not be left on WPRTA vehicles. Each one way trip will require the car seat to be removed upon exit and secured upon entry.

Personal Care Attendant and Guests

A personal care attendant (PCA) is someone who travels with a passenger to provide any assistance. A PCA rides for free and must board and de-board at the

same location as the passenger. Your PCA may also meet you at both ends of your trip.

Please inform the customer service representative, each time you make a reservation, that a PCA will accompany you to ensure sufficient seating availability on the van.

Please inform the customer service representative, each time you make a reservation, if a guest will accompany you to ensure sufficient seating availability on the van.

Please note that if a passenger cannot be left alone at a destination, or if the passenger must be under constant care or supervision, WPRTA may request the passenger to travel with a PCA. WPRTA is unable to alter or modify procedures or policies in order to provide specialized services to passengers who need services beyond the passenger assistance guidelines.

Cancellations and No Shows

Passengers unable to keep scheduled appointments must call (1) hour prior to the designated pick up time for in county trips and by 4:00 p.m. the day before for out of county trips.

Failure to take a scheduled trip or cancel that trip within the cancellation policy guidelines will result in a "No-Show." A pattern of successive no-shows may result in service suspension. No-show suspension guidelines are as follows.

First No-Show: After the first no-show the passenger will receive a verbal warning to call in cancellations in advance per the cancellation guidelines along with a verbal reminder of No Show consequences.

Second No-Show: After the second no-show the passenger will receive a second verbal warning to call in cancellations in advance per the cancellation guidelines along with a additional verbal reminder of No Show consequences.

Third No-Show: After the third no-show the passenger will be placed on a thirty (30) day suspension from the date the third no-show occurred.

All no-shows following the third no-show suspension will be treated as a third no-show resulting in a thirty (30) day suspension,

No-show violations will expire at the end of each fiscal year, beginning on July 1st, and ending on June 30th.

Unattended Customer Procedure

Customers determined as unable to be left unattended (based on age, cognitive limitations or special request of the responsible party) may schedule rides and ride unattended, however, arrangements must be made to have a responsible party meet the vehicle at each location. A customer or their legal guardian must submit a request for a passenger to be determined as unable to be left unattended. The driver will only wait five minutes for the responsible party to meet the vehicle. If no one arrives, the driver will notify the Authority and continue on their route. WPRTA will attempt to reach the designated emergency contact person. If the customer is not met by the end of the route, they will be returned to the bus garage. The customer will not be left unattended, however, the appropriate authorities will be notified to assist in locating a responsible party. Customers who must continue on a route beyond their scheduled destination may be subject to suspension of services. To submit a request, please call 828-464-9444.

Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive or abusive behavior of any type, directed towards WPRTA employees or passengers, will not be tolerated. Instances of abuse will be thoroughly investigated on a case-by-case basis. The severity of the instance will determine the penalty and may range from a letter of warning to criminal prosecution. WPRTA reserves the right to suspend and/or revoke transportation privileges in cases of abusive behavior when the safety and well being of the employees and/or passengers is compromised.

Service Animals

Service animals are welcome to ride the Complementary Paratransit vehicle. Passengers using a service animal are responsible for the animal and will be held liable for the behavior and actions of the animal. Service animals regardless of training or certification may be denied transportation if the animal becomes out of control and effective action is not taken to control the animal by the owner. WPRTA does not transport non-service animals.

Carry on Items

Passengers are allowed to bring on the bus or van as many packages as they are capable of carrying in one trip. Drivers are only allowed to assist with two bags OR one cardboard grocery box. If help is needed for additional packages, a companion must be available to assist the passenger. Passengers packages are to be held within their lap, wheelchair or motorized scooter. Packages are not to be stored in the aisles of the vehicle or in unoccupied seats.

Rules and Regulations to Ride By

The Authority's van operations comply with all state and federal safety policies, as well as criminal statutes and municipal ordinances to ensure the safety of our passengers and the public at large. Here is a list of some of those policies that are meant to help you and your fellow passengers enjoy a safe and stress-free ride:

- No profanity.
- No Smoking.
- No eating or drinking aboard the vehicles.
- The use of portable audio equipment without headphones is prohibited.
- Keep the aisles clear of hazards such as carts, packages, and strollers.
- Life support equipment such as respirators and portable oxygen may be brought on board the vehicles as long as it does not violate the law or rules relating to transportation of hazardous materials and can fit into the vans safely and without obstructing the aisle and/or blocking emergency exits. All carry on portable units must be secured.

Lost and Found

Articles left on vehicles can be claimed by calling WPRTA at 828-464-9444 or by visiting our office at 1515 4th St. S.W., Conover, NC 28613, Monday thru Friday 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Inquiries about lost items should be made as soon as possible.

Inclement Weather

Service will be limited and possibly cancelled when adverse weather creates conditions hazardous for passengers, operators and vehicles. Passengers may call 828-464-9444 for inclement weather updates.

Seat belts and Wheelchair Securement

WPRTA utilizes wheelchair securements straps to secure devices meeting the common wheelchair definition. The vehicles are designed to utilize four (4) securement straps, a lap and a shoulder belt. WPRTA's policy requires that all passengers utilize seat belts for their own safety as well as the safety of other passengers.

Transporting devices meeting the definition of a "common wheelchair"

WPRTA will accommodate all "common wheelchairs" on board its vehicles. Common wheelchair is defined as follows:

- 3 or 4 wheeled device

- Appropriate for indoor use
- No larger than 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length (measured 2 inches above the ground)
- Weighs no more than 600 pounds when occupied.

Provision of service when a mobility device cannot be secured

In the event that a mobility device cannot be secured in any WPRTA vehicle, alternative transportation will be provided if the headway to the next accessible vehicle is more than 30 minutes. The vehicle may be kept in operations for five days from the date of the breakdown was reported to the Driver supervisor and or the Maintenance Director. The operator/driver may recommend to the passenger on the wheelchair to transfer to a seat.

Passengers using mobility devices transferring to a seat

WPRTA may not deny transportation to a wheelchair or its user on the ground that the device cannot be secured or restrained satisfactorily by the vehicle securement system. In the event that the device cannot be secured or restrained, the vehicle operator may recommend to the user of the wheelchair that he/she may transfer to a vehicle seat.

Use of lift ramps by standees

WPRTA will allow persons with ambulatory disabilities who do not use wheelchairs (e.g., persons who use leg braces and canes) to enter the vehicle by standing on the lift. Therefore, individuals who cannot climb the steps to get into a bus would not be eligible for paratransit service if they could enter the vehicle using the lift.

Requesting persons sitting in priority seats vacate those seats when a person with a disability needs to use them

When necessary, a WPRTA driver will ask passengers to vacate designated seats for persons with disabilities and senior citizens. Drivers are not required to enforce the priority seating designation beyond making such a request. Priority seating on WPRTA vehicles are located near the front of the vehicles as posted.

Public information/communications available in accessible formats

WPRTA information materials concerning transportation services are available to the public through print and electronically via the internet. Upon request, they are available in foreign languages, Braille and audio cassette.

Lift and ramp deployment at any stop

WPRTA shall permit a passenger to use the lift to enter or exit a vehicle at any designated stop, unless the lift cannot be deployed.

Comments are Welcome

WPRTA values passenger and agency comments, compliments, complaints and suggestions.

Comments may be mailed to WPRTA at PO Box 459 Conover, NC 28613, by calling 828-464-9444 or by e-mailing your comments to customerservice@wprta.org.

12.2 Flex Route Service

Flex Route Service Description

The flex route service combines the benefits of the traditional fixed route and demand response services.

Service Hours

WPRTA's flex route service (excluding holidays) are Monday through Friday.

Currently there is no Sunday service.

Service is provided Monday through Saturday throughout the year, except for the following observed holidays.

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Martin Luther King Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the day after
- Christmas Eve, Christmas and the day after Christmas

Service Parameters

What is Flex Route Service

A Flex Route is really two types of bus service in one:

1. The bus follows a defined route, picking up and dropping off passengers at designated stops.

2. The bus will also "flex" or deviated [off its route](#). The driver will re-route the bus to locations within [3/4 of a mile](#) of its usual route when a passenger has made a reservation in advance.

There are two types of Bus Stops along the flex route:

1. Flex will always serve **Bus Stops**.
2. Flex will stop at **Deviated Stops** when a passenger has made reservation in advance

Scheduling a flex route trip within the ¾ mile of the route

The flex route is a shared ride, public transportation service. Requests for deviated service may be made during normal business hours by 12:00 p.m. on the preceding business day that service is requested, however additional notice is recommended. Reservations may be made between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Deviated same day service requests are not available. The trip requests for both destination and return shall be scheduled at the time of the request. Same day service is available at designated bus stops.

Trip Scheduling Information

Passengers who require trip scheduling or trip information may call the WPRTA Scheduling Center at 828-464-9444 or 7-1-1 or 1-877-735-8200 for Relay.

When scheduling your trip for flex route service please have the following information ready:

1. Passenger name
2. Pick up address
3. Address of destination
4. Arrival time to destination
5. Approximate return trip request time
6. Type of assistance device, such as wheelchair, cane etc.
7. If a personal care attendant will accompany the passenger
8. If a service animal will accompany the passenger
9. If a guest will accompany the passenger

Trip Denials

A trip request may be denied for the flex route if WPRTA is at full capacity or the time is not available to complete the trip as requested.

Subscription Service

A subscription trip for flex route service is an ongoing reservation for a specific

day of the week (for example, to work, dialysis, physical therapy, merchants, community services etc.). It is useful to schedule a subscription trip when a passenger goes to the same place one or more days each week. Subscription trips allow a passenger to schedule all trip requests with one phone call. Please call our scheduling center during business hours to request a subscription trip. Subscription service is on a space available basis.

A passenger who cancels or changes a subscription trip more than 4 times in a calendar month, will lose the option of using subscription scheduling and will be asked to call in all trips on a daily basis no more than 48 hours in advance for a 30 day period.

Pick-Up and Drop Off

Passengers that request a trip on flex route service are picked up in between designated bus stops. Passengers will receive an estimated pick up time. Please be ready and waiting in a place where you can hear or see the vehicle when it arrives. Drivers are not allowed to enter a residence or other facilities to look for passengers. To avoid delaying other passengers, drivers will only wait five (5) minutes at a deviated stop before proceeding on their route.

It is recommended that passengers accessing the flex route at a bus stop should arrive (10) ten minutes early to avoid missing the bus.

The vehicle requires an obstruction-free approach and sufficient turn-around area for its vehicles. Under some conditions alternate pick-up and drop-off locations may be established because of obstructed driveways, turnarounds, or other safety concerns.

Passenger Assistance

Transportation service is provided by ADA accessible lift equipped vehicles for flex route service. All operators are trained to provide reasonable assistance. Operators are Not trained to provide medical assistance.

Reasonable assistance includes:

- The operator will come to the curb of a residence or pick up location.
- The operator will attempt to notify passengers of arrival by sounding horn.
- The operator will assist passengers in boarding and exiting the van.
- The operator will deliver the passenger to the curb of his/her destination.

Reasonable assistance DOES NOT include:

- Assisting a passenger through the doorway or threshold of a residence.
- Assistance getting in or out of a wheelchair.
- Assistance in getting ready for the trip.
- Administering medication or oxygen.
- Assistance in carrying personal belongings or packages.
- Assisting passengers in wheelchairs up or down stairs that have more than one step.

WPRTA reserves the right to refuse passenger assistance to areas deemed unsafe by the Authority.

Personal Care Attendant and Guests

A personal care attendant (PCA) is someone who travels with a passenger to provide any assistance. A PCA rides for free and must board and de-board at the same location as the passenger. Your PCA may also meet you at both ends of your trip.

Please inform the customer service representative, each time you make a reservation, that a PCA will accompany you to ensure sufficient seating availability on the van.

Please inform the customer service representative, each time you make a reservation, if a guest will accompany you to ensure sufficient seating availability on the van.

Please note that if a passenger cannot be left alone at a destination, or if the passenger must be under constant care or supervision, WPRTA may request the passenger to travel with a PCA. WPRTA is unable to alter or modify procedures or policies in order to provide specialized services to passengers who need services beyond the passenger assistance guidelines.

Cancellations and No Shows

Passengers unable to keep scheduled appointments must call (1) hour prior to the designated pick up time for in county trips and by 4:00 p.m. the day before for out of county trips.

Failure to take a scheduled trip or cancel that trip within the cancellation policy guidelines will result in a "No-Show." A pattern of successive no-shows may result in service suspension. No-show suspension guidelines are as follows.

First No-Show: After the first no-show the passenger will receive a verbal warning to call in cancellations in advance per the cancellation

guidelines along with a verbal reminder of No Show consequences.

Second No-Show: After the second no-show the passenger will receive a second verbal warning to call in cancellations in advance per the cancellation guidelines along with a additional verbal reminder of No Show consequences.

Third No-Show: After the third no-show the passenger will be placed on a thirty (30) day suspension from the date the third no-show occurred.

All no-shows following the third no-show suspension will be treated as a third no-show resulting in a thirty (30) day suspension,

No-show violations will expire at the end of each fiscal year, beginning on July 1st, and ending on June 30th.

Unattended Customer Procedure

Customers determined as unable to be left unattended (based on age, cognitive limitations or special request of the responsible party) may schedule rides and ride unattended, however, arrangements must be made to have a responsible party meet the vehicle at each location. A customer or their legal guardian must submit a request for a passenger to be determined as unable to be left unattended. The driver will only wait five minutes for the responsible party to meet the vehicle. If no one arrives, the driver will notify the Authority and continue on their route. WPRTA will attempt to reach the designated emergency contact person. If the customer is not met by the end of the route, they will be returned to the bus garage. The customer will not be left unattended, however, the appropriate authorities will be notified to assist in locating a responsible party. Customers who must continue on a route beyond their scheduled destination may be subject to suspension of services. To submit a request, please call 828-464-9444.

Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive or abusive behavior of any type, directed towards WPRTA employees or passengers, will not be tolerated. Instances of abuse will be thoroughly investigated on a case-by-case basis. The severity of the instance will determine the penalty and may range from a letter of warning to criminal prosecution. WPRTA reserves the right to suspend and/or revoke transportation privileges in cases of abusive behavior when the safety and well being of the employees and/or passengers is compromised.

Service Animals

Service animals are welcome to ride the Dial-A-Ride vehicle. Passengers using a

service animal are responsible for the animal and will be held liable for the behavior and actions of the animal. Service animals regardless of training or certification may be denied transportation if the animal becomes out of control and effective action is not taken to control the animal by the owner. WPRTA does not transport non-service animals.

Carry on Items

Passengers are allowed to bring on the bus or van as many packages as they are capable of carrying in one trip. Drivers are only allowed to assist with two bags OR one cardboard grocery box. If help is needed for additional packages, a companion must be available to assist the passenger. Passengers packages are to be held within their lap, wheelchair or motorized scooter. Packages are not to be stored in the aisles of the vehicle or in unoccupied seats.

Rules and Regulations to Ride By

The Authority's van operations comply with all state and federal safety policies, as well as criminal statutes and municipal ordinances to ensure the safety of our passengers and the public at large. Here is a list of some of those policies that are meant to help you and your fellow passengers enjoy a safe and stress-free ride:

- No profanity.
- No Smoking.
- No eating or drinking aboard the vehicles.
- The use of portable audio equipment without headphones is prohibited.
- Keep the aisles clear of hazards such as carts, packages, and strollers.
- Life support equipment such as respirators and portable oxygen may be brought on board the vehicles as long as it does not violate the law or rules relating to transportation of hazardous materials and can fit into the vans safely and without obstructing the aisle and/or blocking emergency exits. All carry on portable units must be secured.

Lost and Found

Articles left on vehicles can be claimed by calling WPRTA at 828-464-9444 or by visiting our office at 1515 4th St. S.W., Conover, NC 28613, Monday thru Friday 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Inquiries about lost items should be made as soon as possible.

Inclement Weather

Service will be limited and possibly cancelled when adverse weather creates

conditions hazardous for passengers, operators and vehicles. Passengers may call 828-464-9444 for inclement weather updates.

Seat belts and Wheelchair Securement

WPRTA utilizes wheelchair securements straps to secure devices meeting the common wheelchair definition. The vehicles are designed to utilize four (4) securement straps, a lap and a shoulder belt. WPRTA's policy requires that all passengers utilize them for their own safety as well as the safety of other passengers.

Transporting devices meeting the definition of a "common wheelchair"

WPRTA will accommodate all "common wheelchairs" on board its vehicles. Common wheelchair is defined as follows:

- 3 or 4 wheeled device
- Appropriate for indoor use
- No larger than 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length (measured 2 inches above the ground)
- Weighs no more than 600 pounds when occupied.

Provision of service when a mobility device cannot be secured

In the event that a mobility device cannot be secured in any WPRTA vehicle, alternative transportation will be provided if the headway to the next accessible vehicle is more than 30 minutes. The vehicle may be kept in operations for five days from the date of the breakdown was reported to the Driver supervisor and or the Maintenance Director. The operator/driver may recommend to the passenger on the wheelchair to transfer to a seat.

Passengers using mobility devices transferring to a seat

The WPRTA may not deny transportation to a wheelchair or its user on the ground that the device cannot be secured or restrained satisfactorily by the vehicle securement system. In the event that the device cannot be secured or restrained, the vehicle operator may recommend to the user of the wheelchair that he/she may transfer to a vehicle seat.

Use of lift ramps by standees

The WPRTA will allow persons with ambulatory disabilities who do not use wheelchairs (e.g., persons who use leg braces and canes) to enter the vehicle by standing on the lift.

Requesting persons sitting in priority seats vacate those seats when a person with a disability needs to use them

When necessary, a WPRTA driver will ask passengers to vacate designated seats for persons with disabilities and senior citizens. Drivers are not required to enforce the priority seating designation beyond making such a request. Priority seating on WPRTA vehicles are located near the front of the vehicles as posted.

Public information/communications available in accessible formats

WPRTA information materials concerning transportation services are available to the public through print and electronically via the internet. Upon request, they are available in foreign languages, Braille and audio cassette.

Lift and ramp deployment at any stop

WPRTA shall permit a passenger to use the lift to enter or exit a vehicle at any designated stop, unless the lift cannot be deployed.

Comments are Welcome

WPRTA values passenger and agency comments, compliments, complaints and suggestions.

Comments may be mailed to WPRTA at PO Box 459 Conover, NC 28613, by calling 828-464-9444 or by e-mailing your comments to customerservice@wprta.org.

SECTION 12.3 Demand Response Service

Description of Demand Response Service

The WPRTA demand response service is available to the general public. The demand response service offers shared ride, curb to curb, public transportation in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba counties. Service is offered upon seat and route availability. New passengers are encouraged to call the scheduling office for service information and individual trip planning.

Demand Response Service Hours

WPRTA's Demand Response Service hours (excluding holidays) are:

Monday through Friday- 5:30 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Currently there is no Saturday or Sunday service.

Service is provided Monday through Friday throughout the year, except for the following observed holidays.

- New Year's Day
- Good Friday
- Martin Luther King Day
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving and the day after Thanksgiving
- Christmas Eve, Christmas and the day after Christmas

Demand Response Service Parameters

WPRTA offers service within Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba county and additional pre-determined destinations. Demand response (general public) service and agency eligible contracted service is provided.

Scheduling a Demand Response Trip

Requests for service may be made during normal business hours by 12:00 p.m. on the preceding business day that service is requested, however additional notice is recommended. Reservations may be made between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Same day service requests are not available. The trip requests for both destination and return shall be scheduled at the time of the request.

Trip Scheduling Information

Passengers who require trip scheduling or trip information may call the Scheduling office. When scheduling your trip for Demand Response, please have the following information ready:

1. Passenger name
2. Pick up address
3. Address of destination
4. Arrival time to destination
5. Approximate return trip request time
6. Type of assistance device, such as wheelchair, cane etc.
7. If a personal care attendant will accompany the passenger
8. If a service animal will accompany the passenger
9. If a guest will accompany the passenger

Trip Denials

A trip request may be denied for Demand Service if WPRTA is at full capacity or the time is not available to complete the trip as requested.

Subscription Service

A subscription trip for Demand Response is an ongoing reservation for a specific day of the week (for example, to work, dialysis, physical therapy, merchants, community services etc.). It is useful to schedule a subscription trip when a passenger goes to the same place one or more days each week. Subscription trips allow a passenger to schedule all trip requests with one phone call. Please call our scheduling center during business hours to request a subscription trip. Subscription service is on a space available basis.

A passenger who cancels or changes a subscription trip more than 4 times in a calendar month, will lose the option of using subscription scheduling and will be asked to call in all trips on a daily basis no more than 48 hours in advance for a 30 day period.

Pick-Up and Drop Off

Passengers will receive a designated pick up time for all and Demand Response trips. The driver may arrive up to thirty (30) minutes after the designated pick up time. Please be ready and waiting in a place where you can hear or see the vehicle when it arrives. Drivers are not allowed to enter a residence or other facilities to look for passengers. To avoid delaying other passengers, drivers will only wait five (5) minutes before proceeding on their route.

The vehicle requires an obstruction-free approach and sufficient turn-around area for its vehicles. Under some conditions alternate pick-up and drop-off locations may be established because of obstructed driveways, turnarounds, or other safety concerns.

Passenger Assistance

Transportation service is provided by ADA accessible lift equipped vehicles for demand response trips. All operators are trained to provide reasonable assistance. Operators are Not trained to provide medical assistance.

Reasonable assistance includes:

- The operator will come to the curb of a residence or pick up location.
- The operator will attempt to notify passengers of arrival by sounding horn.
- The operator will assist passengers in boarding and exiting the van.
- The operator will deliver the passenger to the curb of his/her

destination.

Reasonable assistance DOES NOT include:

- Assisting a passenger through the doorway or threshold of a residence.
- Assistance getting in or out of a wheelchair.
- Assistance in getting ready for the trip.
- Administering medication or oxygen.
- Assistance in carrying personal belongings or packages.
- Assisting passengers in wheelchairs up or down stairs that have more than one step.

WPRTA reserves the right to refuse passenger assistance to areas deemed unsafe by the Authority.

Dial-A-Ride Fares

The WPRTA Board establishes the fare for the demand response (general public) service. Fare must be paid upon each boarding by cash or ticket. Exact fare is required, operators cannot make change, Passengers may purchase ticket booklets from our Dial-A-Ride operators. The current fares are as follows:

- \$2.50 per one way trip or one Dial-a-Ride ticket
- \$22.50 per booklet of Dial-a-Ride ticket Tickets (each booklet contains 10 tickets)

Car Seats

WPRTA requires the personal care attendant to provide an appropriate car seat for each child that requires a car seat. The proper use and installation of the Child Safety Restraint Seat is fully the responsibility of the accompanying adult. The selections and utilization of a Child Safety Restraint Seat must follow State and Federal Guidelines. A ride will not be provided for anyone violating this policy.

Car seats may not be left on WPRTA vehicles. Each one way trip will require the car seat to be removed upon exit and secured upon entry.

Personal Care Attendant and Guests

A personal care attendant (PCA) is someone who travels with a passenger to provide any assistance. A PCA rides for free and must board and de-board at the same location as the passenger. Your PCA may also meet you at both ends of your trip.

Please inform the customer service representative, each time you make a reservation, that a PCA will accompany you to ensure sufficient seating availability on the van.

Please inform the customer service representative, each time you make a reservation, if a guest will accompany you to ensure sufficient seating availability on the van.

Please note that if a passenger cannot be left alone at a destination, or if the passenger must be under constant care or supervision, WPRTA may request the passenger to travel with a PCA. WPRTA is unable to alter or modify procedures or policies in order to provide specialized services to passengers who need services beyond the passenger assistance guidelines.

Cancellations and No Shows

Passengers unable to keep scheduled appointments must call (1) hour prior to the designated pick up time for in county trips and by 4:00 p.m. the day before for out of county trips.

Failure to take a scheduled trip or cancel that trip within the cancellation policy guidelines will result in a "No-Show." A pattern of successive no-shows may result in service suspension. No-show suspension guidelines are as follows.

First No-Show: After the first no-show the passenger will receive a verbal warning to call in cancellations in advance per the cancellation guidelines along with a verbal reminder of No Show consequences.

Second No-Show: After the second no-show the passenger will receive a second verbal warning to call in cancellations in advance per the cancellation guidelines along with a additional verbal reminder of No Show consequences.

Third No-Show: After the third no-show the passenger will be placed on a thirty (30) day suspension from the date the third no-show occurred.

All no-shows following the third no-show suspension will be treated as a third no-show resulting in a thirty (30) day suspension,

No-show violations will expire at the end of each fiscal year, beginning on July 1st, and ending on June 30th.

Unattended Customer Procedure

Customers determined as unable to be left unattended (based on age, cognitive limitations or special request of the responsible party) may schedule rides and ride unattended, however, arrangements must be made to have a responsible

party meet the vehicle at each location. A customer or their legal guardian must submit a request for a passenger to be determined as unable to be left unattended. The driver will only wait five minutes for the responsible party to meet the vehicle. If no one arrives, the driver will notify the Authority and continue on their route. WPRTA will attempt to reach the designated emergency contact person. If the customer is not met by the end of the route, they will be returned to the bus garage. The customer will not be left unattended, however, the appropriate authorities will be notified to assist in locating a responsible party. Customers who must continue on a route beyond their scheduled destination may be subject to suspension of services. To submit a request, please call 828-464-9444.

Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive or abusive behavior of any type, directed towards WPRTA employees or passengers, will not be tolerated. Instances of abuse will be thoroughly investigated on a case-by-case basis. The severity of the instance will determine the penalty and may range from a letter of warning to criminal prosecution. WPRTA reserves the right to suspend and/or revoke transportation privileges in cases of abusive behavior when the safety and well being of the employees and/or passengers is compromised.

Service Animals

Service animals are welcome to ride the Dial-A-Ride vehicle. Passengers using a service animal are responsible for the animal and will be held liable for the behavior and actions of the animal. Service animals regardless of training or certification may be denied transportation if the animal becomes out of control and effective action is not taken to control the animal by the owner. WPRTA does not transport non-service animals.

Carry on Items

Passengers are allowed to bring on the bus or van as many packages as they are capable of carrying in one trip. Drivers are only allowed to assist with two bags OR one cardboard grocery box. If help is needed for additional packages, a companion must be available to assist the passenger. Passengers packages are to be held within their lap, wheelchair or motorized scooter. Packages are not to be stored in the aisles of the vehicle or in unoccupied seats.

Rules and Regulations to Ride By

The Authority's van operations comply with all state and federal safety policies, as well as criminal statutes and municipal ordinances to ensure the safety of our passengers and the public at large. Here is a list of some of those policies that are meant to help you and your fellow passengers enjoy a safe and stress-free

ride:

- No profanity.
- No Smoking.
- No eating or drinking aboard the vehicles.
- The use of portable audio equipment without headphones is prohibited.
- Keep the aisles clear of hazards such as carts, packages, and strollers.
- Life support equipment such as respirators and portable oxygen may be brought on board the vehicles as long as it does not violate the law or rules relating to transportation of hazardous materials and can fit into the vans safely and without obstructing the aisle and/or blocking emergency exits. All carry on portable units must be secured.

Lost and Found

Articles left on vehicles can be claimed by calling WPRTA at 828-464-9444 or by visiting our office at 1515 4th St. S.W., Conover, NC 28613, Monday thru Friday 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. Inquiries about lost items should be made as soon as possible.

Inclement Weather

Service will be limited and possibly cancelled when adverse weather creates conditions hazardous for passengers, operators and vehicles. Passengers may call 828-464-9444 for inclement weather updates.

Seat belts and Wheelchair Securement

WPRTA utilizes wheelchair securements straps to secure devices meeting the common wheelchair definition. The vehicles are designed to utilize four (4) securement straps, a lap and a shoulder belt. WPRTA's policy requires that all passengers utilize them for their own safety as well as the safety of other passengers.

Transporting devices meeting the definition of a "common wheelchair"

WPRTA will accommodate all "common wheelchairs" on board its vehicles. Common wheelchair is defined as follows:

- 3 or 4 wheeled device
- Appropriate for indoor use
- No larger than 30 inches in width and 48 inches in length (measured 2 inches above the ground)
- Weighs no more than 600 pounds when occupied.

Provision of service when a mobility device cannot be secured

In the event that a mobility device cannot be secured in any WPRTA vehicle, alternative transportation will be provided if the headway to the next accessible vehicle is more than 30 minutes. The vehicle may be kept in operations for five days from the date of the breakdown was reported to the Driver supervisor and or the Maintenance Director. The operator/driver may recommend to the passenger on the wheelchair to transfer to a seat.

Passengers using mobility devices transferring to a seat

The WPRTA may not deny transportation to a wheelchair or its user on the ground that the device cannot be secured or restrained satisfactorily by the vehicle securement system. In the event that the device cannot be secured or restrained, the vehicle operator may recommend to the user of the wheelchair that he/she may transfer to a vehicle seat.

Use of lift ramps by standees

The WPRTA will allow persons with ambulatory disabilities who do not use wheelchairs (e.g., persons who use leg braces and canes) to enter the vehicle by standing on the lift.

Requesting persons sitting in priority seats vacate those seats when a person with a disability needs to use them

When necessary, a WPRTA driver will ask passengers to vacate designated seats for persons with disabilities and senior citizens. Drivers are not required to enforce the priority seating designation beyond making such a request. Priority seating on WPRTA vehicles are located near the front of the vehicles as posted.

Public information/communications available in accessible formats

WPRTA information materials concerning transportation services are available to the public through print and electronically via the internet. Upon request, they are available in foreign languages, Braille and audio cassette.

Lift and ramp deployment at any stop

WPRTA shall permit a passenger to use the lift to enter or exit a vehicle at any designated stop, unless the lift cannot be deployed.

Comments are Welcome

WPRTA values passenger and agency comments, compliments, complaints and suggestions.

Comments may be mailed to WPRTA at PO Box 459 Conover, NC 28613, by calling 828-464-9444 or by e-mailing your comments to customerservice@wprta.org.

SECTION 13 Bus Advertising Guidelines

Guidelines for Exterior and Interior Advertising

- WPRTA will provide advertising opportunities for full color process advertising on individual buses to multiple advertisers
- WPRTA will contract with an outside vendor for the sale, design, and removal, installation of vehicle advertising.

Character of the Advertisements

- Advertisements shall conform to recognized business standards and shall not conflict with the laws or ordinances of the United States, the State of North Carolina or the city and county members of WPRTA.
- WPRTA must approve all advertising.

Standard of Advertising

WPRTA has sole and unquestioned authority to determine what constitutes appropriate advertisements. The following standards for advertising have been adopted and advertising may not be displayed which:

1. Is false, misleading or deceptive;
2. Relates to illegal activities;
3. May be offensive to the public determined by WPRTA
4. Advertises alcohol or tobacco products;
5. Supports or opposes a candidate, issue or cause, or which advocates or opposes a religion, denomination, religious creed, tenet or belief;
6. May be construed to reflect support of WPRTA for a particular product, service, idea, etc.

SECTION 14 Inclement Weather

Definition of Severe Inclement Weather Conditions/Events

For the purposes of this document, “severe inclement weather” is defined as follows:

Weather conditions involving rain, snow, sleet, ice, and/or winds of sufficient severity to restrict or prevent normal transportation operations on highways, or threaten the safety of transit passengers and employees. Severe inclement weather conditions may result in flooding, icing, high wind conditions, or blockages of highways that disrupt or prevent normal transit operations. Examples of severe inclement weather include snow and ice storms, hurricanes, nor'easters, and tornadoes.

Interagency Responsibilities/Coordination with Other Agencies

The primary responsibility for continuing transit service during inclement weather lies with Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority (WPRTA). WPRTA will be responsible for preparing press releases and contacting media regarding transit services during inclement weather.

Normal transit operating hours are defined as 05:30 to 18:30 hours, Monday through Friday and 08:30 hours to 17:00 hours on Saturday.

The WPRTA Operations Manager will continue to monitor transit routes for any changes in conditions. Cancellation and or delay of service will be announced no later than 04:00 hours. Operations Manager will announce service changes to the Marketing Manager and Dial A Ride Supervisor no later than 03:30 hours in order to alter schedule on the phone system to reflect the severe weather schedule. Procedures will be maintained so that the phone system can be changed from an alternate location if necessary. Procedures to change the phone message will be maintained by the Marketing Manager.

For Rural Services:

In the event that WPRTA service opens late, closes early or cancels service for the entire day, passengers must contact the WPRTA scheduling office at 828- 464-9444 to reschedule transportation services. WPRTA will make every effort to accommodate the passenger's request in view of previously scheduled services.

Agencies will be responsible to call WPRTA for inclement weather updates. Agencies should also designate one person to call WPRTA with their late openings/early closings no later than 05:00 hours. If such notification is not provided, any trips completed by WPRTA will be billed to the agency as "no shows." Please call 828-464-9444 or email scheduling@wprta.org. Please do not call or send emails to individuals as they may not be available to receive your message.

Continuation/Suspension of Service

Bus service will be continued to the degree possible, consistent with reasonable safety, during any inclement weather conditions. Rather than discontinuing service in total,

service may be curtailed in areas that are impassable. It may be necessary to temporarily discontinue service in cases of inclement weather. Such discontinuation of service shall be as brief as possible.

As a general rule, WPRTA rural van service will generally follow the lead of the county school bus service. If school bus service is delayed in the morning, or is cancelled for the day, then WPRTA service will also be delayed or cancelled if deemed appropriate to do so by the Operations Manager.

Priority will be given to returning people home, and those who have serious medical needs (e.g. dialysis patients). Requests for urgent medical rides and life-sustaining medical trips should not be provided by private cars in inclement weather. Appropriate referrals should be made to other modes including ambulances. If the trip is not urgent or life sustaining (e.g. dialysis), riders should be encouraged to reschedule.

Right to Cancel Service

WPRTA will make every effort to ensure that service can be provided as requested; however, the safety of passengers and drivers will not be compromised. Therefore, WPRTA reserves the right to contact any agency or passenger in order to revise, cancel or reschedule trips in the event of severe inclement weather conditions.

Announcements/Communicating With the Public

In the event of inclement weather, the Marketing Manager will telephone and/or fax the following media outlets so that both employees and the public will be informed of any service cancellations, delays, or detours.

- Television: WSOC TV Channel 9
- Information shall also be posted on the WPRTA telephone weather hotline.
- **WPRTA Telephone Weather Hotline: 828-464-9444 or 828-464-9446**

Communication with Contracting Agencies (Demand - response Services)

If severe inclement weather occurs during the day, the following guidelines will be in effect:

Scheduling staff of WPRTA will call contracting agencies and passenger destination sites to advise that WPRTA will be picking up passengers earlier than scheduled.

Scheduling staff will call family members if requested to make sure that a family member will be at home when the passenger will be dropped off early due to severe inclement weather closings.

Scheduling staff will call any general public demand-response passengers that are scheduled after the early closing decision has been made to notify them that they will not be picked up as scheduled.

Emergency/Disaster Management

In the event of an emergency or natural disaster, all scheduled transportation service may be discontinued. Every effort will be made to take those passengers who are in route or at appointments to their homes as quickly as possible. WPRTA will assist county (or municipal) emergency management services in providing emergency transportation in the event of a disaster if deemed safe to transport by the Operations Manager. The system vehicles will be used to transport disabled and/or elderly persons, and any other citizen needing such transportation, to safe shelters.

For additional information, see the “Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority Severe Inclement Weather Plan (May 14, 2009)”.

SECTION 15 Complaint Policy and Resolution Process

15.1 If a customer or other public member has a complaint about service, policies, or other aspects of the Authority’s operation, they are to contact the Authority in person, through written correspondence, by e-mail or by calling (828) 464-9444. The person must provide their name, address, phone number and a detailed explanation of the complaint, e.g., route, time, bus number, etc. This will allow management staff to more completely and promptly investigate and respond to the complaint.

15.2 If the complaint is still not resolved to the customer’s satisfaction within five working days they may submit the complaint in writing to the Operations Director’s office at 1515 4thST SW, Conover, NC 28613 - attention to Ms. Foster. The customer will again be required to provide the information outlined above plus details of their interaction with the frontline management. This writing may include a request to meet face to face with the Operations Director to discuss the problem and/or request a written response within ten working days.

If a meeting is necessary, the following guidelines will be followed.

- Evidence commonly relied upon by reasonable, prudent persons will be considered. This includes statements (oral statements, documents, copies of documents, reports, official and business records.)
- Irrelevant, immaterial, redundant or unduly repetitious evidence will be excluded.
- A record of the meeting (electronic or otherwise) will be kept, as determined by the Operations Director.

15.3 If the meeting and/or the response are not scheduled/received within ten working days from the date the request is received by the Operations Director, and/or the response does not resolve the problem to the customer’s satisfaction, they may file a formal and final complaint with the Executive Director . Note that

the Executive Director is the final and last escalation level within the informal complaint process.

The complaint needs to be in writing as well. Sent to the following address:

Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority
Executive Director
1515 4th ST SW
Conover, NC 28613
(828) 464-9444
FAX (828) 466-0570

SECTION 16 TRANSIT SERVICE GUIDELINES

PURPOSE

Greenway's Transit Service Standards and Guidelines are intended to make the transportation services provided to our customers comfortable, convenient and easy to use, and to ensure that services are designed to be reliable, timely, safe and efficient. This policy guides decision making when service reallocation and investment actions are under consideration.

The Service Standards and Guidelines help bring clarity and consistency to the service development process and define conditions that require corrective action, while allowing flexibility to respond to varied customer needs and community expectations in an accountable, equitable and efficient manner. Transit Service Guidelines document was adopted on November 18, 2011.

GREENWAY'S FAMILY OF SERVICES

Greenway currently provides four different types of service:

American's with Disabilities Act Complementary Paratransit Service (ADA):

This is a special advance reservation service for eligible disabled persons within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from a fixed route bus route in the urbanized area.

Dial-A-Ride: Dial-A-Ride is an advance reservation shared ride service which provides specialized curb to curb service for individuals in the rural areas and those urban areas that do not receive fixed-route bus service.

Flex: Flex service is the newest member of the family. It is a hybrid form of operation that combines the features of Dial-A-Ride and fixed route service. The vehicle follows a defined route, picking up and dropping off passengers at designated stops. The vehicle will also "*Flex*" or *deviate* off its route. The driver may go to locations within $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile of the designated route when a passenger has made a reservation in advance. This route is being targeted in areas served by Dial-A-Ride where there are several people traveling together each day to a common destination, such as a community center, work site or commercial area.

Local Fixed-Route: Service is offered along a fixed route and fixed schedule with designated bus stops.

APPENDIX A FEDERAL AND STATE POLICIES

SECTION 1 Drug Free Workplace and Drug and Alcohol Policy

- 1.1 The federal Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988 requires that employers receiving federal grants and contracts establish drug-free workplaces policies.
- 1.2 The federal Omnibus Transportation Act of 1991 sets up drug-testing policies and procedures for employees in trucking, bus and train systems.
- 1.3 The State of North Carolina has legislated the North Carolina Controlled Substance Abuse Act, and the North Carolina Toxic Vapors Act. Employees are responsible for ensuring compliance with these laws. Employees of the Authority are also bound by the requirements of the U.S. Controlled Substances Act.
- 1.4 Safety sensitive employees are subject to drug and alcohol testing in accordance with 49 CFR 655.15. Such safe sensitive employees are subject to regular drug and alcohol testing.
- 1.5 When the Authority has safety sensitive employees, the Authority will have a regular drug and alcohol testing program for such employees. Authority employees meeting the following criteria for safety sensitive employees are regularly tested for drugs and alcohol:
Safety sensitive employees are those:
 - a) Operating revenue vehicles, even when the vehicle is not in service.
 - b) Operating non-revenue vehicles which require a Commercial Driver License (CDL).
 - c) Controlling dispatch or movement of a revenue service vehicle.
 - d) Maintaining, repairing, overhauling or rebuilding revenue service vehicles or equipment used in revenue service.
 - e) Carrying a firearm for security purposes.

SECTION 2 Public Hearings and Comment

- 2.1 49 United States Code (USC) 53, § 5307 (d)(1)(1), requires public comment.
- 2.2 The WPRTA shall hold a public hearing subject to the procedures herein before doing any of the following or any other matter when a public hearing is required by law:
 1. Adopting a change which increases the transit fares charged the general public;
 2. Revising the service on a bus line which reduces the transit route miles by at least twenty-five (25%) percent;

3. Revising the service on a bus line which reduces the transit revenue vehicles miles by at least twenty-five (25%) percent; or
 4. Implementing a new bus service route.
- 2.3** Experimental or emergency service changes, which are described in paragraphs A.2, A.3 or A.4, may be instituted for 180 days or less without a public hearing, provided that a public hearing must be held during that time period if the experimental or emergency service is to continue for more than 180 days.
- 2.4** If there are a number of changes on a route in a fiscal year which add up to the percentages set forth in paragraphs A.2 or A.3 of this section, a hearing must be held prior to the change which causes the percentage to be exceeded.
- 2.5** Nothing in this section is intended to require a public hearing for standard seasonal variations in transit service unless the number, timing or type of service changes meet the criteria set forth in paragraphs A.2 or A.3 of this section.
- 2.6** Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, it shall not be considered a service change for which a public hearing is required if reduced or discontinued service is replaced by another type of service or service from a different provider without substantial interruption and at a level which when compared to the previous service, does not constitute a reduction exceeding the percentages set forth in paragraphs A.2 or A.3 of this section.
- 2.7** Any public hearing required as set forth above shall be conducted as set forth in this section.
- a. The Manager of Marketing will be responsible for the posting and publishing of legal notice which, unless otherwise required by law, will include that Notice of Hearing shall be published in at least one newspaper of general circulation, at least fourteen (14) days prior to the date of the Hearing as set forth above.
 - b. Notice of the Public Hearing shall also be announced by posting in transit vehicles and sending a copy of the Notice to each Manager of the Member Entities represented on the Authority Board.
 - c. Information on the proposed changed will be available to the public at the Authority offices two weeks prior to the Hearing Date.
 - d. The Public Hearing shall be called by the Board of Directors and the Executive Director will serve as the Hearing Officer.
 - e. Written comments as well as e-mail comments will be taken up to 72 hours after the conclusion of the Hearing.
 - f. A staff report containing the Public Hearing comments and information as

well as staff recommendations will then be presented to the Board at its next meeting.

- 2.8** Any individual or group who wishes to address the Board at a meeting or at any public hearing shall abide by the following rules. Public address to the Board is not allowed unless said public comment time is set forth on the meeting agenda.
- a. Proceed to the podium;
 - b. State your name clearly;
 - c. Speakers may speak on any topic unless it is a topic for which a public hearing is being held on the same meeting agenda;
 - d. All comments should be directed to the full Board or Hearing Officer, not to an individual Board Member;
 - e. Speakers should avoid repetition;
 - f. Groups should designate a spokesperson when possible;
 - g. Limit comments to three minutes or less;
 - h. An individual may only speak one time during the “Public Speaks Out” portion of a meeting agenda;
 - i. Speakers should provide any handout materials to the Authority’s Clerk immediately after they speak;
 - j. The “Public Comment” portion of the agenda is limited to one hour unless waived by the Board by majority vote.

The Board does not take action on public comment unless all members present unanimously agree to do so, but they may refer the matter to staff for follow up.

- 2.9** The Authority will not discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities on the basis of disability in the Authority’s services, programs, or activities. The Authority will generally, upon request, provide appropriate aids and services leading to effective communication for qualified persons with disabilities so they can participate equally in the Authority’s programs, services, and activities. The Authority will make all reasonable modifications to policies and programs to ensure that people with disabilities have an equal opportunity to enjoy all Authority programs, services, and activities. Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communications, or a modification of policies or should contact the office of the Marketing Manager as soon as possible, but **no later than 48 hours** before the scheduled event.

SECTION 3 Charter Bus

- 3.1** 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 604 requires that if a recipient desires to provide any charter service using FTA equipment or facilities the recipient must first determine if there are any private charter operators willing and able to provide the charter service which the recipient desires to provide. To the extent that there is at least one such private operator, the recipient is prohibited from providing charter service with FTA funded equipment or facilities unless one

or more of the exceptions in Sec. 604.9(b) applies.

- 3.2 The Authority has identified private charter operators that are willing and able to provide charter service in the Authority service area. It has further been determined that none of the exceptions in Section 604.9(b) are applicable to Authority.
- 3.3 In compliance with 49 CFR, Part 604 Charter Service, the Authority specifically restricts any and all charter service.

SECTION 4 Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)

- 4.1 The Authority is committed to the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program established by the Authority in compliance with 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 23. The Authority will ensure that DBE's, as defined in Part 26, have an equal opportunity to receive and participate in U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) assisted contracts.
- 4.2 To comply with this policy, the Authority will seek to do the following:
 - a) Ensure nondiscrimination in the award and administration of USDOT assisted contracts.
 - b) Ensure that the DBE program is narrowly tailored in accordance with applicable law.
 - c) Assist the development of firms so that they can compete successfully in the marketplace outside the DBE program.
 - d) Help remove barriers commonly encountered by DBE's in USDOT assisted contracts.
 - e) Create an environment in which DBE's can compete fairly with non-DBE's for USDOT assisted contracts.
 - f) Ensure that only firms that fully comply with 49 CFR Part 26 eligibility standards are permitted to participate as DBE's.
 - g) Encourage minority-owned businesses to become certified under the NC Department of Transportation Uniform Certification Program.
- 4.3 The Authority and its contractors shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability or sex in the performance of any USDOT assisted contract. Failure by any Authority contractor to carry out all stated DBE requirements is a material breach of the contract, which may result in the termination of the contract or such other remedy, as the Authority deems appropriate.

Responsibility for compliance with 49 CFR Part 26 lies with the Executive Director. Assignment of DBE duties is exclusively within the purview of the Executive Director, provided the assignment(s) meets the requirements of the regulation.

SECTION 5 Title VI

- 5.1** Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority is committed to a policy of non-discrimination in the conduct of its business, including its Title VI responsibilities - the delivery of equitable and accessible transportation services. Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority recognizes its responsibilities to the communities in which it operates and to the society it serves. It is Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority's policy to utilize its best efforts to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, disability or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under its program of transit service delivery and related benefits.
- 5.2** Toward this end, it is Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority's objective to:
- A. Ensure that the level and quality of transportation service is provided without regard to race, color, disability or national origin;
 - B. Identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects of programs and activities on minority populations and low-income populations;
 - C. Promote the full and fair participation of all affected populations in transportation decision making;
 - D. Prevent the denial, reduction, or delay in benefits related to programs and activities that benefit minority populations or low-income populations;
 - E. Ensure meaningful access to programs and activities by persons with limited English proficiency.

The responsibility for carrying out Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority's commitment to this program has been delegated to the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority Executive Director by the Board of Directors. Title VI staff is responsible for the day-to-day operations of this Program and the Finance Manager who will receive and investigate Title VI complaints which come through the complaint procedure. However, all managers, supervisors and employees share in the responsibility for making Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority's Title VI Program a success.

Additional information concerning Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority's Title VI obligations and the complaint procedure can be found on the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority web site or by calling (828) 464-9444

- 5.3** Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, 42 U.S.C. 2000d, et seq., provides that no person shall be subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin under any program or activity that receives Federal financial assistance. Title VI and its implementing regulations require that FTA recipients take responsible steps to ensure meaningful access to the benefits, services,

information, and other important portions of their programs and activities for individuals who are Limited English Proficient (LEP).

- 5.4 To that end, Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority provides translation and interpretation services free of charge upon request by calling (828) 464-9444. The Authority contracts with a service that provides real-time translation services in 3 different languages and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week.
- 5.5 Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority is committed to a policy of non-discrimination in the conduct of its business, including its Title VI responsibilities: the delivery of equitable and accessible transportation services. Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority recognizes its responsibilities to the communities in which it operates and to the society it serves. It is Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority's policy to utilize its best efforts to assure that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under its program of transit service delivery and related benefits.

Section 6.0 Title VI Complaint Procedure

- 6.1 If you believe that you have been excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or subjected to discrimination based on race, color or national origin under Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority's program of transit service delivery or related benefits, you may file a complaint with the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority EEO Officer, 1515 4th Street SW, Conover, NC 28613 or by telephone (828) 464-9444. We encourage you to make your complaint in writing.
- 6.2 All complaints will be investigated promptly. Reasonable measures will be undertaken to preserve any information that is confidential. The Authority's EEO Officer will review every complaint, and when necessary, assign a neutral party to investigate. At a minimum the investigating officer will:
 - a) Identify and review all relevant documents, practices and procedures;
 - b) Identify the person making the complaint; witnesses or anyone identified by the Complainant; anyone who may have been subject to similar activity, or anyone with relevant information.

Upon completion of the investigation, the EEO Officer will complete a final report for the Executive Director. If a Title VI violation is found to exist, remedial steps as appropriate and necessary will be taken immediately. The Complainant and his/her representative will also receive a final report together with any remedial steps. The investigation process and final report should take no longer than

twenty-five (25) business days. If no violation is found and the complainant wishes to appeal the decision, he or she may appeal directly to the Executive Director of Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority, 1515 4th Street SW, Conover, NC 28613.

- 6.3** Complaints may also be filed with the Federal Transit Administration's Office of Civil Rights, no later than 180 days after the date of the alleged discrimination,

Federal Transit Administration
230 Peachtree Street, NW, Suite #800
Atlanta, GA 30303.

- 6.4** The Authority's EEO Officer shall maintain a log of Title VI complaints received from this process which shall include the date the complaint was filed; a summary of the allegations; the status of the complaint; and actions taken by Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority in response to the complaint. Should Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority receive a Title VI complaint in the form of a formal charge or lawsuit, the EEO Officer shall be responsible for the investigation and maintenance of the log as described herein.

APPENDIX B: EMPLOYEE ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORMS

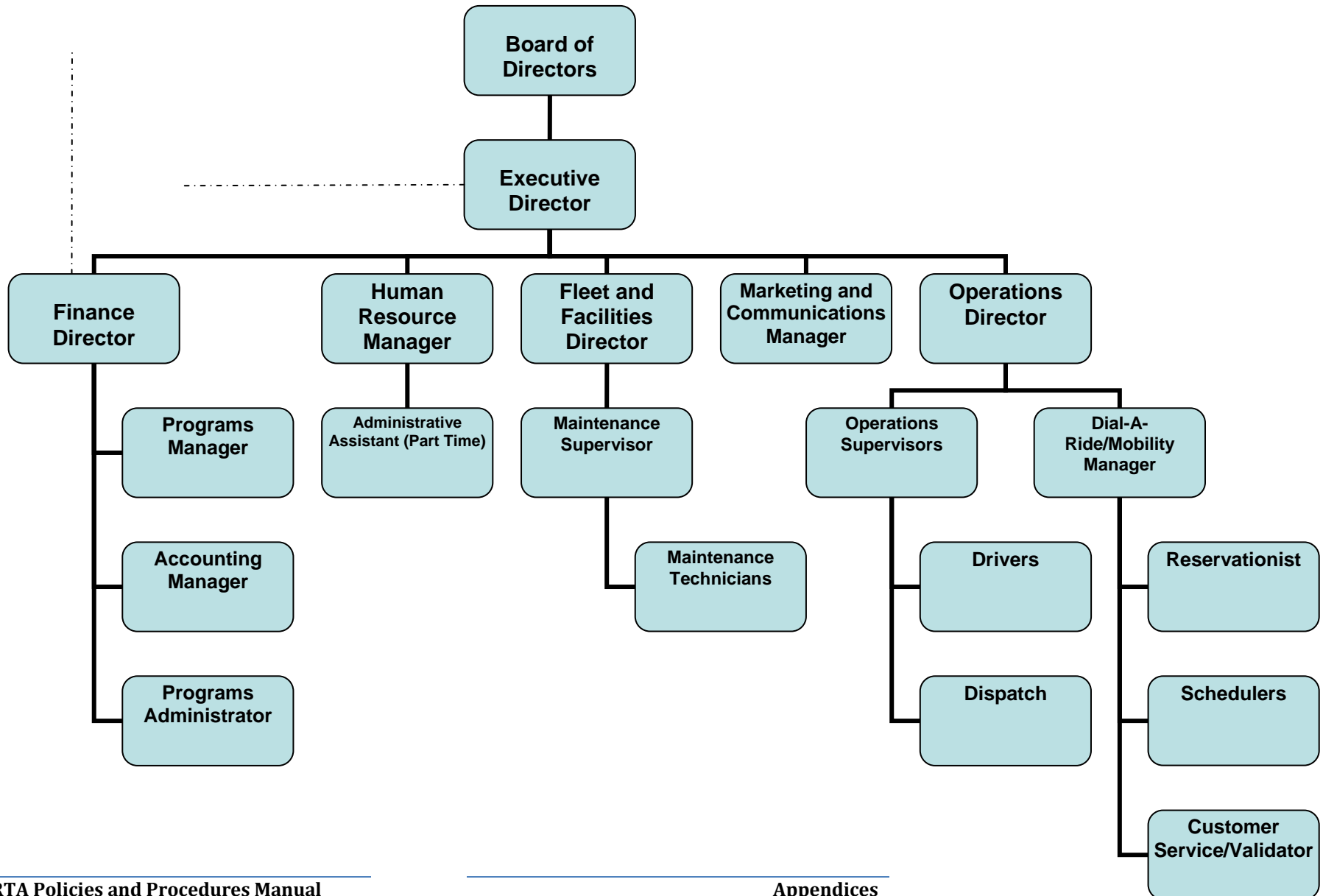
**AUTHORITY
POLICY MANUAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I acknowledge that I received and read a copy of the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority Policies Manual. If I had any questions, I asked the Director and obtained clarification. I understand that that my continued employment with the Authority constitutes acceptance of the policies and any changes that may be made in content or application. I understand that this manual does not create an employment contract and my employment is at the will of the Authority.

Employee Name

Date

APPENDIX C: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



APPENDIX D: GRANTS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE

Grant Applications

- 1) Within ninety (90) days of publication of the Federal Register for apportionments or filing of the initial grant of each fiscal year, whichever occurs first, the Authority Executive Director and the Authority Attorney will submit the annual Certifications and Assurances in TEAM as required by FTA.
- 2) In preparation for submission of an FTA grant, the Executive Director, Director of Finance and other members of the Authority staff in will prepare an annual budget for approval by the Authority Finance & Budget Committee in compliance with local, state and federal guidelines and available revenues versus anticipated expenses. The Executive Director and the Authority's legal counsel will complete the annual certifications and assurances in TEAM-Web.
- 3) Prior to the grant application, the Executive Director and or his or her assigns will post in local publications an *Opportunity for Public Hearing and a Proposed Program of Projects (POP)*. The POP will list the projects identified in the grant to be applied for; the federal share of revenues; state share of revenues; and the local share of revenues; a brief project description; the service area; the STIP reference; consideration for ADA provisions; and any other pertinent information relevant to the grant. The opportunity for a public hearing will extend for a period of fifteen (15) days from publication.
- 4) Upon publication of the Authority's annual §5307 FTA allocation in the Federal Register, the Executive Director and or his or her assigns will draft the project in TEAM-Web. A project name will be issued by the Authority. The project will be compliant with the adopted Authority capital and operating budget for the year which is being developed. The Executive Director and or his or her assigns will work with FTA Region IV to address any issues that may arise with the project. Once FTA concurrence is received that the project is eligible for submission to DOL, the Executive Director and or his or her assigns will submit the project through TEAM-Web. This process usually occurs in the spring, but may be delayed by federal budget authorization. Should only a portion of the grant be eligible for award, staff will determine, in consultation with FTA Region IV whether to apply for a partial award or file the grant once the federal budget is passed.

- 5) Upon receipt from FTA that DOL concurrence has been met, the Executive Director will execute the award and notify the Director of Finance of the grant number and the availability of funds.
- 6) If a public hearing is not requested, the Executive Director or his designee will publish a final *Program of Projects (POP)* following the approval and execution of the grant agreement. The final POP will list the projects as approved in the FTA grant agreement.
- 7) Additional FTA grants for capital, planning, new freedom, JARC or other financial awards through FTA will be applied for utilizing the same procedures as above, with the exception of the timeline which is project specific.

Grants Management

- 1) Throughout the lifecycle of an FTA project, the Executive Director and the Director of Finance will monitor the progress of the project to ensure that it is on-time, and within the established project budget. If the project budget appears to be inadequate, the Executive Director and the Director of Finance will evaluate the project, the reason for any budget deficit and resolution to complete the project. Should additional funding be necessary to complete the project and additional funding from FTA is available; the Executive Director and or his or her assigns will complete a budget revision in TEAM-Web and notify Regional headquarters of the change.
- 2) A proposed program of projects will be developed and advertised in local newspapers. The public will be given an opportunity to request a public hearing be held on any of the proposed projects. Should a public hearing be requested, it will be heard at a time when a quorum of the board of directors can hear public comment. If warranted, the proposed program of projects can be changed at this point.
- 3) As required, the Executive Director and or his or her assigns will complete the Milestone and Progress Report in TEAM-Web for each open grant on an annual basis. Staff will evaluate open projects to ensure that they are on schedule. A Milestones & Progress (MP) report will be submitted for each open grant no later than October 30 of each year.
- 4) The Executive Director and Director of Finance will complete the Federal Financial Report (FFR) in TEAM-Web for each open grant. Staff will evaluate open projects to ensure that they are within budget. Unliquidated obligations, which is defined as any financial obligation that has been made but not paid for will be reported as required by FTA. Obligations could be in the form of a purchase order, contract or any other legally binding document for which the authority will have a financial obligation at some point. A FFR report will be submitted for each open grant no later than October 30 of each year.

Electronic Clearinghouse (ECHO) Funds Disbursement

- 1) ECHO-Web is used to request funds for open projects. ECHO-Web can be accessed at <https://ftaecho.fta.dot.gov/>. The authorized user must use their assigned User Name, Password, and ECN to sign into ECHO-Web.
- 2) The user requests a payment by entering the applicable project number and the amount of the request. Requests may only be made in whole dollars. The user must also confirm the following statement is true, "I acknowledge the above information is correct."
- 3) Once the payment requested is submitted, the funds are direct deposited into the checking account on file.
- 4) ECHO-Web may also be used to view reports for previous fund requests.
- 5) In preparation for an ECHO funds request, the Director of Finance & Administration will prepare an ECHO funds request worksheet outlining the amount of funds being drawn, the local availability of matching funds, and a statement that the funds being drawn are compliant with FTA guidelines. The ECHO funds request form will be approved by the Executive Director prior to any funds being drawn.

Closeout and Deobligation

Once a federally funded project is complete, the Executive Director and or his or her assigns will close out the project in TEAM-Web. Any unexpended funds will be evaluated to determine if they can be obligated to another project. The Executive Director and Director of Finance will issue the final MP Report and FFR in TEAM-Web. The project budget will be balanced to deobligate any surplus funds and FTA Region IV will be notified that the grant has been marked for closeout.

APPENDIX E:
ACCOUNTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

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Introduction

This manual has been prepared to document the internal accounting procedures for the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority (WPRTA). Its purpose is to ensure that assets are safeguarded, that financial statements are in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles, and that finances are managed with responsible stewardship.

All personnel with a role in the management of WPRTA's fiscal operations are expected to uphold the policies in this manual. It is the intention of WPRTA that this accounting manual serves as our commitment to proper, accurate financial management and reporting.

Additional financial policies and procedures that are not considered to be accounting policies and procedures are also found in the general Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority Policies and Procedures Manual.

Division of Duties

The following is a list of personnel who have responsibilities within the accounting department:

Board of Directors:

1. Reviews and approves all financial reports.
2. Reviews and approves annual budget.
3. Reviews and approves all contracts for goods and services that will exceed \$5,000.

Finance Director:

1. Approves all vouchers, invoices and checks.
2. Receives unopened bank statements.
3. With the Executive Director, and input from the staff directors, develops the annual budget.
4. Reviews and approves all financial reports.
5. Reviews and approves list of pending check disbursements.
6. Reviews all vouchers and invoices for those checks which require his or her signature.
7. Authorizes all inter fund transfers.
8. Reviews all bank reconciliations.
9. Reviews the payroll summary for the correct payee, hours worked and check amount.
10. Approves all reimbursements.
11. Manages the assets accounts.
12. Reconciles the bank accounts.
13. Approves all general ledger journal entries.
14. Manages cash flow.
15. Manages all grant budgets and contracts.
16. Manages all grant reimbursements.

Payroll and Benefits Administrator:

1. Processes the payroll.
2. Submits payroll information to payroll vendor.
3. Maintains all employee benefit records.
4. Manages employee benefit programs and the accounting for the programs including but not limited to workers compensation, retirement, medical insurance, dental insurance, life insurance, cafeteria plans, and voluntary benefit options.
5. Manages COBRA.

6. Reviews and accounts for employee vacation, holiday, sick leave, FMLA and other leave programs both paid and unpaid.

Accounting Manager:

1. Processes all receipts and disbursements.
2. Maintains and reconciles the general ledger.
3. Prepares subsidiary ledgers and journals.
4. Maintains the Chart of Accounts.
5. Prepares bank deposits.
6. Prepares key financial indicator reports.
7. Prepares balance sheets and P/L statements.

Finance Administrator:

1. Receives and opens all incoming mail, **except** the bank statements.
2. The Finance Administrator does not initiate or post journal entries.
3. Prepares cash receipts log and invoice log.
4. Distributes copies of invoices to appropriate departments for review.
5. Mails all checks for payments.
6. Processes fares.
7. Manages accounts receivables.
8. Manages bus probe (GFI) system and reports.

All Department Directors:

1. Develops first draft of department budgets and works with the Executive Director and Finance Officer to finalize.
2. Accountability to approved departmental budgets in purchasing decisions and in preparing check request vouchers with the proper account code.

Cash Receipts Procedures

Finance Administrator (FA) receives all incoming mail. All checks received by the FA should be recorded on a cash receipts log and stamped for deposit only. The Assistant Finance Officer then makes a copy of the check forwarded to the Accounting Manager along with the original. The Accounting Manager will then prepare the check for deposit. A copy of the cash receipts log will be given to the Finance Director on a daily basis.

Next, the Accounting Manager (AM) prepares a deposit slip and deposits the funds into the central bank account. The validated deposit slip should be attached to a sheet of paper, along with a copy of the check and any other pertinent information regarding the check or deposit. This is then placed into a deposit binder, which contains all deposits in chronological order by month.

A deposit not forwarded to the bank should be locked in the safe located in the Finance department. All deposits should be made on the day received, unless the bank is closed for holiday or non-business days.

No single bank account should contain more over which the FDIC or other entity will insure.

Inter-Fund Transfers:

WPRTA uses two bank checking accounts, one for fares received, and the other, a general fund, for all other needs. At the point that there is more than \$5,000 of fares deposited, the Finance Director can authorize the transfer of fares into the general fund.

Funds received from Credit Card Charges:

WPRTA does not accept credit cards.

Cash Disbursements Procedures

1. Incoming invoices will be logged in by the Finance Administrator and the FA will make a copy of the invoice. The copy will be distributed to the appropriate staff director who initiated the purchase for review and approval. The FA will maintain the original invoice in the finance department.
2. The staff person responsible for ordering the product or service will check the validity of the invoice against proposals/bids, etc. work accomplished/delivered and prepare a check request voucher prior to disbursement dates.
3. Twice monthly on the 15th and last day of the months (or the next business day if the date falls on a weekend or holiday), check disbursements including accounting codes applicable, along with original invoices and any supporting documentation from staff directors should be prepared by the Accounting Manager and then presented to the Finance Director for final review and approval. The Finance Director will stamp each invoice with the LGC Pre-Audit Certification and sign the checks. The Finance Director will then forward the check disbursements to the Executive Director for additional signature and review.
6. If there are any questions or concerns about the disbursements, the Finance Director should return the check to the Accounting Manager for correction of the problem.
7. The Accounting Manager should weekly then run an aging accounts payable, which is generated by the accounting software. A summary of the disbursements to be paid will be sent to the Finance Director for review, along with the current balance in any and all cash accounts.
8. After the checks have been signed, the Accounting Manger will double check the work, cancel the invoice by stamping PAID on it in red ink, and pass the checks on to the Finance Administrator for mailing.
9. All checks will be mailed as soon as this process is completed.
10. Supporting documentation should be filed by the Finance Administrator or Accounting Manager in appropriate vendor files.
11. The Finance Director will utilize the paid invoice files to respond to any discrepancies which arise with vendors or other payees.

12. Once weekly, the Accounting Manager will check the invoice log to determine if there are any outstanding invoices which have not yet been paid. If so, the Accounting Manager will investigate the nonpayment of these invoices with the responsible staff member.

Reconciliations

Cash Flow:

The goal of Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority is to maintain a minimum of three months of operating reserves. In the event that balances fall below that amount the Executive Director and the Finance Director should be notified immediately.

Bank Reconciliations:

1. Bank statements are to be received unopened by the Finance Director (FD). The FD should initially review the contents for inconsistent check numbers, signatures, cash balances and payees and endorsements. After this cursory review is conducted, the official should complete the process of reconciling the account to the general ledger using the software reconciliation function of the accounting system. The FD should initial and date the bottom, right hand corner of the first page of each bank statement reconciled. The reconciled bank statement should then be forwarded to the Accounting Manager for secondary review and signature.
2. Reconciliations for each account should occur promptly upon receipt of the bank statements. All accounts will be reconciled no later than 10 business days after receipt of the monthly bank statements. In the event it is not possible to reconcile the bank statements in this period of time, the Executive Director should be notified by a written memo from the Finance Department.
3. When reconciling the bank accounts, the following items should be included in the procedures:
 - a. A comparison of dates and amounts of daily deposits as shown on the bank statements with the cash receipts journal.
 - b. A comparison of inter-organization bank transfers to be certain that both sides of the transactions have been recorded on the books.
 - c. An investigation of items rejected by the bank, i.e., returned checks or deposits.
 - d. A comparison of electronic credits and deposits by dates received and dates sent.
 - e. A comparison of canceled checks with the disbursement journal as to check number, payee and amount.
 - f. An accounting for the sequence of checks both from month to month and within a month.

- g. An examination of canceled checks for authorized signatures, irregular endorsements, and alterations.
 - h. A review and proper mutilation of void checks.
 - i. Investigate and write off checks which have been outstanding for more than six months.
5. The Accounting Manager upon receipt of the completed bank reconciliation, prepares any general ledger adjustments.
 6. Copies of the completed bank reconciliations will be filed in a secure cabinet and made available for review by the Executive Director, Board Chairperson and independent auditors.

Reconciliations of Other General Ledger Accounts:

1. Each month the Accounting Manager and Finance Director should review the ending balance shown on balance sheet accounts such as the cash accounts, accounts receivable, accounts payable and deferred revenue. The Accounting Manager and Finance Director should review the bank reconciliations, schedules of accounts receivable and deferred revenue and the aging of accounts payable to support the balances shown on the balance sheet.
2. Assets - These accounts will include cash, petty cash, pre-paid expenses, real estate, equipment and fixtures, security deposits, and intangible assets.
 - a. Cash - The balances in cash accounts should agree with the balances shown on the bank reconciliations for each month.
 - b. Petty Cash - The balance in this account should always equal the maximum amount of all petty cash funds. The current amount equals \$250.00.
 - c. Pre-paid expenses - The amounts in these accounts should equal advance payments paid to vendors at the end of the accounting period.
 - d. Property, Equipment & Fixtures - The amounts in this account should equal the totals generated from the audited depreciation schedules. When additional purchases are made during the year, the balances in the accounts may be updated accordingly.
 - e. Security Deposits - The balance in this account should equal amounts paid in escrow to landlords and lessors and should not change frequently, but should be updated as applicable.
3. Liabilities - These accounts are described as accounts payable, payroll tax liabilities, loans and mortgages payable, and amounts due to others.

- a. Accounts Payable - The balance in this account should equal amounts owed to vendors at the end of the accounting period and the aging report.
 - b. Payroll Tax Liabilities - The amounts in these accounts should equal amounts withheld from employee paychecks as well as the employers portion of the expense for the period, that has not been remitted to the government authorities.
 - c. Due to Others - If there are any amounts owed to others at the end of the period they should be recorded and the correct balance maintained in the general ledger accounts.
4. Income/Expenses - These accounts are described as income from membership, contributions, publications, and other expense line items such as salaries, consulting fees, etc.
- a. Income - The amounts charged to the various cash accounts should be reconciled with funding requests, funders reports, draw down schedules, etc.
 - b. Gross Salary Accounts - The balances in the gross salary accounts should be added together and reconciled with the amounts reported on quarterly payroll returns.
 - c. Consulting - The amounts charged should be reconciled to the contracts.

Petty Cash Fund

1. The Petty Cash Fund is set in the amount of \$250.00.
2. These funds are to be used to reimburse employees for incidental expenses incurred on behalf of WPRTA, or by the finance department staff to make incidental purchases on behalf of WPRTA.
3. A petty cash log is managed by the Finance Administrator.
4. The log shows the date, amount and nature of the transaction.
5. The Finance Administrator ensures that there is a goods receipt/invoice for all petty cash disbursements.
6. The person to whom the petty cash reimbursement/etc. has been requested, completes a petty cash request form.
7. The Finance Administrator reviews the form, gives the cash to the recipient, and requires the recipient to sign the log indicating receipt of the cash.
8. The Finance Administrator codes the goods invoice to the correct general ledger expense account and completes a petty cash disbursement and replenishment form.
9. The Accounting Manager receives the form and enters the transaction into the general ledger (crediting petty cash and debiting the appropriate expense account).
10. The Accounting Manager then prepares a check in the amount of the disbursements for the day made payable to the bank on which the check is drawn in order to replenish the petty cash fund. This is forwarded to the Finance Director for approval and signature and then to the Executive Director or designee for secondary signature. The general ledger entry is to credit the bank account and debit petty cash for the replenishment amount.

Purchases

To Prompt a Purchase:

1. When the normal cash disbursement procedure of invoice, etc., is not appropriate, (i.e., postage, petty cash, etc.) a check request should be completed and forwarded with any order form or other documentation to the Finance Director or Executive Director for approval. If the check is made out to either the either the Executive Director or Finance Director, that individual cannot approve the check request voucher.
2. Approved check requests should be sent to the Finance Director for payment.
3. In the absence of backup materials, receipts for the purchase must be provided to the Finance Director for attachment to the check request within two weeks from the check date.

Proper Documentation for all Purchases

Every instance of a purchase must be documented with travel authorizations, receipts, individuals paid for, nature of business, etc. before the expense will be considered authorized and will be approved for reimbursement. See details below.

1. Lodging - Provide an itemized receipt from the hotel detailing every charge and the name of the person(s) for whom lodging was provided.
2. Meals/Entertainment - Provide a receipt showing separately the cost for food/beverage and gratuities, and including the names of every person for whom food or beverage was provided and the specific business purpose which was furthered by the expenditure. For example, A Luncheon Meeting with Jane Doe, president of the City of XYZ Manager, and John Doe, executive director of the Acme bus company, to finalize the speakers and program for the 2012 annual partnership conference in Hickory.
3. Other Expenditures - A receipt from the vendor detailing every individual good or service purchased (including class of service for commercial transportation) accompanied by an explanation of the specific business purpose which was furthered by each expenditure. For example, A round trip coach flight Charlotte to Washington, DC for the Executive Director to attend a national conference.

The Accounting Manager will double check all reimbursement requests against receipts provided and run a calculator tape which will be attached to the reimbursement form.

Capital Expenditures:

For all major expenditures such as computers, furniture, audit services, printing services, etc., procurements will be completed according to WPRTA's procurement policies and procedures which are found in WPRTA's general policies and procedures manual.

Consultants:

Contracts with consultants will include rate and schedule of pay, deliverables, time frame, and other information such as workplan, etc. Justification for payment should be submitted to file.

Contracts:

Contracts for purchasing products or services, similar to a purchase order, should be created and maintained for the file whenever appropriate. All contracts to exceed \$5,000 over the course of the year should be approved by the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Fixed Asset Management

1. A permanent property log or database is to be maintained by the Finance Director for all fixed assets purchased by Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority.
2. The log should contain the following information:
 - a. date of purchase
 - b. description of item purchased
 - c. received by donation or purchased
 - d. cost or fair market value on the date receipt
 - e. donor or funding source, if applicable
 - f. funding source restrictions on use or disposition
 - g. identification/serial number (if appropriate)
 - h. depreciation period
 - i. vendor name and address
 - j. warranty period
 - k. inventory tag number (all fixed assets should be tagged with a unique identifying number)
3. At least annually, a physical inspection and inventory should be taken of all WPRTA fixed assets and reconciled to the general ledger balances. Adjustments for dispositions should be made.
4. The Finance Director should be informed, in writing, via an interoffice memorandum of any material changes in the status of property and equipment. This should include changes in location, sale of, scrapping of and/or obsolescence of items and any purchase or sale of real estate or other fixed assets
5. All capital items which have a cost greater than \$5,000.00 will be capitalized and depreciated.

Payroll

Personnel:

1. The Payroll and Benefits Administrator and Human Resources Manager are jointly charged with the responsibility of maintaining personnel files on staff persons.
2. Each personnel file should contain the following information, at a minimum.
 - a. Employment application or resume
 - b. A record of background investigation
 - c. date of employment
 - d. position, pay rates and changes therein
 - e. authorization of payroll deductions
 - f. earnings records for non-active employees
 - g. W-4 Form, withholding authorization
 - h. I-9 Immigration Form
 - l. termination data, when applicable
3. All personnel records are to be kept locked in a locking file cabinet in the Finance Department office. Access to these files other than the above listed individuals include the Finance Director, Executive Director, Board Chairperson or external regulatory auditors. Access to others must be for specific reason as approved by the Human Resources Manager or Finance Director and the requested files must be reviewed in the presence of the Human Resources Manager or Finance Director.

Payroll Preparation and Timekeeping:

1. Timesheets and or time clock records are to be prepared by all staff persons and submitted at the end of each payroll period. WPRTA processes payroll every other week to average 26 pay periods per year. Time should be input on a real time daily basis and, if in writing, completed in ink. Correction fluid should never be used in preparing timesheets. If an error needs to be corrected, a line should be drawn through the item and the corrected information recorded, and initialed by the person who made the correction.
2. Timesheets are to be signed by the staff person and his/her supervisor.
3. All approved timesheets/records should be submitted to the Payroll Administrator, who will verify the hours worked against his/her record.

4. The Payroll Administrator should then process the time and report the information to the payroll service bureau. The information reported should include:
 - a. hours worked, by cost center
 - b. changes in pay rates or employment status, benefit deductions, withholdings
 - c. vacation, sick or personal hours used and earned
5. The Finance Director should review the payroll summary page of the payroll service report for inappropriate payees or unusual hours.
6. Electronic payment of payroll by direct deposit will be available to employees by the designated hour and time. The usual time is after midnight, every other Friday morning. Paystubs should be distributed by the Payroll Administrator on Thursday prior to the direct deposit the subsequent day. In the event that a paper paycheck is prepared, the paycheck will be available after 9:00 a.m. on the payroll Friday. In the event that that a designated person other than the staff person, has been requested to receive either the paystub or the payroll check, a memo should be received in writing from the staff person and proper identification should be requested from the party picking up the pay check or stub.

Financial Reporting

Monthly Reports:

The Accounting Manager should prepare a set of monthly financial reports for initial distribution to the Finance Director, Executive Director and final distribution to the Board of Directors. The reports should include: a balance sheet and a statement of income and expenses for each department (operating, project); a consolidated balance sheet and consolidated income and expense report which show all departments combined; a budget-to-actual report for all accounts included in the annual operating budget; a list of deferred and receivable funds, and a cash flow projection

The initial monthly statements should be reviewed by the Finance Director and Executive Director prior to distribution to the Board for comments and approval.

Year-End Report/Audit:

At fiscal year-end, an end of year A-133 financial should be completed by an independent audit firm. The annual auditing process will begin on or about September 10. The audit report will be initially reviewed by the Finance Director and Executive Director prior to distribution to the Board of Directors.

Request for Proposals to select an independent audit firm will be prepared as determined by the Board of Directors.

Grant Compliance

1. When a new grant is received or renewed, a copy of the executed grant must be forwarded to the Finance Director.
2. The Finance Director should set up a permanent file for the grant and maintain the contract along with any other financial correspondence regarding the grant.
3. It is the responsibility of the Finance Director to review the grant contract and extract any fiscal items which must be complied with by Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority.

Governmental Generally Accepted Accounting Principles:

4. It is a policy of Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority to adhere to any restrictions imposed by its funders, both governmental and private. Therefore, WPRTA employees are expected to bring to the attention of management, any instances of non-compliance.
5. State and Federal program funds received in advance will be deposited into an insured bank account. Any interest earned from those monies will be accounted for according to specific grant guidelines.
6. Advanced funds received by WPRTA for eligible operating expenses reimbursement will be used to pay the vendor within 3 business days of the receipt of funds.
7. Additional WPRTA grant management guidelines are outlined in the separate grants management policies and procedures manual.

Fiscal Policy Statements

1. All cash accounts owned by WPRTA will be held in financial institutions which are federally insured and have received a favorable CRA (Community Reinvestment Act) rating.
2. All capital expenditures which exceed \$5,000 will be capitalized on the books and records of the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority.
3. No salary advances will be made under any circumstances.
4. Fiscal Management personnel are required to take annual vacation which will not interfere with fiscal procedures. Variances to this policy shall be made in special circumstances, with written permission from the Executive Director.
5. It is the policy of Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority to reimburse out of pocket expenses only when supporting documentation has been presented for approved costs incurred.
6. It is the policy of the Western Piedmont Regional Transit Authority to establish pay rates which equal or surpass the federal minimum wage.
10. All funds received by WPRTA will be segregated using a full computerized ledger accounting system. Monthly program and project reports and grant progress reports will be produced by finance department staff.
12. The Finance Director and Executive Director are authorized signers on all WPRTA bank accounts. Two signatures are required for all checks written. An alternate third signer is the Marketing Manager.
13. Bank statements will be reconciled monthly in order to account for any outstanding or lost checks.
14. Expense reports will be maintained which will disclose the nature of expenses, and the dates incurred.
15. Separate files will be maintained for each bank account and each vendor. Files will be kept separately for each fiscal year.
16. The services of a Certified Public Accountant will be engaged to prepare a formal financial audit at fiscal year-end.
17. Correction fluid should never be used in preparing timesheets or any accounting documents.

Accounting System Backup Procedures

1. The Accounting Manager is responsible for backing up the data of the accounting system at the close of business each day. Complete, not *modified*, backups should be done. WPRTA uses a flash drive back up media storage device.
2. In addition the accounting system is backed up continuously onto the network server.
3. Each day the 2 separate flash drives should be used to back up the accounting files.
4. The Accounting Manager should take one flash drive off premises and place the other drive in the fire box in the safe for safeguarding.
6. Annual flash drives or other portable storage devices should be compressed and stored in a fire proof safe off site, as well as a copy in the fire proof safe in-house.