

WHEREAS, The Washington County Personnel Policy includes a provision under Article III, Section 2 prohibiting the employment of relatives as defined therein; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Washington County recognizes that while the employment of relatives may create the perception of or actual conflicts of interests, the relatively small population and unique geography of Washington County also causes significant recruitment difficulties which the current policy does not take into consideration; and

WHEREAS, other small jurisdictions in North Carolina have similarly recognized the need to balance the legitimate concerns of employing relatives in the workplace against the equally legitimate challenges faced by some governments in finding well qualified applicants to successfully fill certain positions with limited available resources; and

WHEREAS, such jurisdictions have created various exceptions to the general prohibition against all relatives in the workplace by incorporating such exceptions in their respective personnel policies; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Washington County now desires to update its policy and follow suit by adopting the attached Revised Section to provide greater flexibility to allow the filling of certain positions with a relative or family member as defined therein, if doing so would not create an immediate conflict of interest and would be in the best interest of Washington County despite the potential conflicts that such employment may be perceived to create or may actually create in the future.

NOW THEREFORE, THE WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
HEREBY RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:

1. That Article III, Section 2, of the current Washington County Personnel Policy is hereby redacted and replaced in its entirety by the language of the Revised Section attached to this resolution.

Revised Section:

**Article III Section 2: Employment of Relatives**

Washington County is committed to a policy of employment and advancement based on qualifications and merit, and does not discriminate in favor of or in opposition to the employment of relatives.

The term "family member" as used in this section shall be defined to include any and all of the following: spouse, parent, guardian, child, grandparent, grandchild, sister, brother, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, first cousin, and all of the various combinations of half, step, in-law, and legally adopted relationships that can be derived therefrom, and any person otherwise related by blood or marriage residing in an employee's home.

Due to the potential for perceived or actual conflicts, such as favoritism or personal conflicts from outside the work environment which can be carried into the daily working relationship, it is generally not advisable for two or more family members to be employed within the same department or office where one member would have authority to supervise, appoint, remove, discipline or evaluate or audit the performance or work of another family member, or where other circumstances exist which would place family members in a situation of actual or reasonably foreseeable conflict between the County's interests and their own.

Therefore, the employment of family members within the same department, office, or otherwise within the same chain of authority shall be avoided, but in the least restrictive manner possible so as not to unnecessarily exclude any family members from potential employment with any portion of the County's workforce to which the conflicts described in this section do not reasonably apply.

However, notwithstanding the foregoing, due to the County's relatively small population and unique geography which can cause significant recruitment difficulties, limited exceptions to this section and policy may be granted only if the County Manager (or other hiring authority if applicable) determines that: (a) the employment of a family member otherwise prohibited by this policy will not deter or affect the performance of all of the employees in the relevant department or office; and (b) such employment is necessary due to recruitment difficulties, emergencies, or other grounds that would reasonably justify making an exception to this section and policy in the County's best interests.

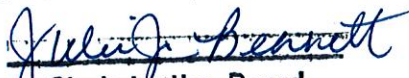
Any such exceptions granted shall be made in writing, shall be reported to the Board of Commissioners, and may contain additional stipulations, terms and conditions which must be met on an ongoing basis to maintain employment with the County, or may govern the procedures to be followed in the event of future conflicts or disputes between family members or between any family members and the County.

Employees are responsible for reporting any changes in relationships that may be subject to this policy immediately to their supervisor who is responsible for reporting the same to the County Manager. The County may require one family member to quit employment 60 days after any marriage or other event creating a violation of this policy if a mutually-agreeable solution cannot be reached between the County and the family member employees.

Notwithstanding anything herein to the contrary, the Board of Commissioners may approve the appointment by the Sheriff or Register of Deeds of a relative by blood or marriage of nearer kinship than first cousin as required by Chapter 153A-103 (1) of the North Carolina General Statutes.

Upon its adoption, this section shall apply immediately to all new prospective employees, but shall not apply retroactively to any known family members employed at such time by Washington County if otherwise compliant with the previously adopted section and policy revised and replaced by this section.

Approved by the Washington County  
Board of Commissioners at their  
meeting held June 1, 2015."

  
Clerk to the Board