



Brooks County Employee Handbook

2022 Edition

Prepared by:

The Brooks County Board of Commission

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE AND DISCLAIMER

The Brooks County Employee Handbook should only be used as a summary or index for the Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia.

This handbook is not binding and, in the event of any inconsistencies between the Brooks County Employee Handbook and the Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia, the Comprehensive Policy Manual shall control. It is the responsibility of each Brooks County employee to consult the Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia should any question regarding the policies or procedures arise.

The Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia may be reviewed by contacting your Human Resources Coordinator, Supervisor, Department Manager, or County Administrator.

Employees who have suggestions for improvements to any County programs may submit their requests to the Human Resources Coordinator or County Administrator.

Welcome to Brooks County

Brooks County is a county located in the U.S. state of Georgia, on its southern border with Florida. As of the 2020 census, the population was 16,243. The county seat is Quitman. In 1818 U.S. President Andrew Jackson made a treaty with the Spanish and the Native Americans and claimed the land that is now Brooks County for the United States. Settlers later came down the Coffee Road from middle Georgia in their covered wagons, ox-drawn carts, and buggies. These early settlers had three things uppermost in their minds: religion, education, and agriculture. Roads were projected to run from the courthouse to each part of the county. Founded on December 11, 1858, Brooks County was created from portions of Lowndes and Thomas counties.

The 494-square-mile county was named for Preston S. Brooks of South Carolina, an extremely popular young legislator known for his intensely southern sentiments and his zealous defense of southern rights. In 1853 Brooks was elected to Congress as a States' Rights Democrat and served until his death four years later, at the age of thirty-eight. A year later the Georgia legislature showed their appreciation of him by naming a county for him. The largest town in Brooks County, Quitman, was named the county seat. Betty Sheffield Camellia Betty Sheffield Camellia The first courthouse, a small, temporary building, opened in 1859. A permanent edifice was begun in the same year, but the Civil War (1861-65) delayed its construction. That courthouse, completed in 1864, is still in use today, although it has undergone remodeling and modernizing.

Quitman is known as the Camellia City because of the plants grown there, and also because Betty Sheffield, developer of the well-known camellia variety of the same name, was a longtime resident. Other small towns in the county include Barney (famous for its peaches), Barwick, Morven, and Pavo.

Brooks County is well known for its robust agricultural footprint as well as its wildlife. Quail, dove, ducks, and deer abound in the fields and forests. Brooks County also offers excellent fishing in its many lakes and streams, which are open to the public.

Archbold Medical Center, located in Quitman, GA is a 25-bed facility was established in 1935 and has 24-hour emergency facilities.

CHAPTER II ORGANIZATION

Our Government consists of a five-member Board of Commissioners. Under the guidelines of the Commissioners is a County Administrator, a Sheriff and Tax Commissioner, the Judicial System and other Boards and Authorities.

CHAPTER III EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

GENERAL

Life Insurance

The County pays for Basic Life Insurance in the current amount of \$25,000.00

Voluntary life insurance is available for the employee, spouse and eligible dependents. Dependent coverage is also available for spouse and children. The employee pays the premium cost.

Medical and Hospitalization Coverage

The County will pay Single Health Coverage for the employee after 30 days of employment with Brooks County. The family rates are based on plan choice.

Dental and Vision Insurance

Employees may participate in the in-network plan where providers are paid on a fee schedule basis. Out-of-network providers are processed at the 90th percentile of usual, customary and reasonable charges. The premium is paid by the employee.

Supplemental Insurance Products

Employees may select supplemental products for short-term disability, critical injury, cancer and accident. The employee pays all costs.

Miscellaneous Services

Additional services and programs include direct deposit, Wellness Incentives, Employee Assistance, Employee Appreciation Activities, Employee and Retiree Service Recognition, and Education Reimbursement.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please contact Human Resources.

LEAVE

Personal Leave and Sick Leave

The County recognizes two types of leave, annual leave and sick leave. Annual leave is leave that is earned to be used for vacations, personal business activities and other personal activities. Sick leave is accumulated to be taken for bona fide illness, injury and other medical related necessities such as physician appointments, medical examinations, and dental appointments. Sick leave is available for the employee's personal health care as well as for the care of members of the immediate family. The accruals listed in this handbook are based on a 80 hour bi-weekly pay period. The County also recognizes that the Sheriff's Department, Fire Department and 911/EMA accruals are based on the SOP for that department.

Method of earning annual leave:

Eligible employees with zero (0) through two (2) years of continuous service earn .0192 hours of annual leave for each hour worked per pay period (26 pay periods). This equates to one (1) week of annual leave per year.

Eligible employees with three (3) to five (5) years of continuous service earn .0269 hours of annual leave for each hour worked per pay period (26 pay periods). This equates to seven (7) days of annual leave per year.

Eligible employees with six (6) to ten (10) years of continuous service earn .0385 hours of annual leave for each hour worked per pay period (26 pay periods). This equates to two (2) weeks of annual leave per year.

Eligible employees with ten (10) years plus of continuous service earn .0577 hours of annual leave for each hour worked per pay period (26 pay periods). This equates to three (3) weeks of annual leave per year.

Method for earning sick leave:

Eligible employees with zero (0) through five (5) years of continuous service earn .0192 hours of sick leave for each hour worked per pay period (26 pay periods). This equates to one (1) week of sick leave per year.

Eligible employees with five (5) years but less than ten (10) years of continuous service earn .0385 hours of sick leave for each hour worked per pay period (26 pay periods). This equates to two (2) weeks of sick leave per year.

Eligible employees with at least ten (10) years of continuous service earn .0577 hours of sick leave for each hour worked per pay period (26 pay periods). This equates to three (3) weeks of sick leave per year.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 230.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

Other Leave

Regular full-time employees are eligible for other types of leave such as bereavement, military, family medical and jury duty.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policies Numbered 224.1, 225.1, 227.1 and 229.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

CHAPTER IV
EMPLOYMENT and CONDUCT
GENERAL

Grievance Procedure

Any regular employee will have the right to utilize the grievance and appeal procedure. Probationary employees and temporary employees shall not have the right to utilize the grievance and appeal procedure.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 303.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

Discipline Policy

It is the policy of the County to administer discipline fairly, reasonably, and impartially. Failure or refusal to meet reasonable standards of job performance or personal and/or professional conduct shall constitute just cause for disciplinary action.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 302.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

Equal Employment Opportunity

Applicants for positions and employees of the Brooks County government shall be assured of fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of personnel administration.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 201.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

Outside Employment

Any Employee desiring to perform outside employment must submit a request on the Outside Employment form to his or her Department Head for approval or disapproval.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 208.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

Performance Appraisals

Performance appraisals are conducted in October of each year, with approved increases to take effect on January 1st of each calendar year.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 209.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

Personal Appearance

Each employee is expected, while on duty, to have a neat, clean and well-groomed appearance consistent with employee's duties.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 308.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

Drug Free Workplace

Brooks County employees are prohibited from engaging in the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession or use of illegal drugs or alcohol in the work place.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 306.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

Personal Information and Personnel Records

Employee personnel records are considered confidential and the property of the County.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 235.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

Probation Period

New hire employees must complete a minimum 90 day probation period; however, this may be extended up to one year.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 211.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

Special Licenses and Memberships

The County will pay an annual lump sum payment equal to the current annual dues or fees for each employee who is required by ordinance or State or Federal law to be a member of a professional organization or who must maintain a particular certification or license as a condition of employment.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 401.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

Training Programs, Workshops and Seminars

The County encourages and coordinates training opportunities so employees can perform their responsibilities in the most efficient and effective manner.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 402.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

WAGES AND WORK PERIODS

Pay Periods

County employees are paid bi-weekly. County Commissioners and monthly exempt employee payroll is generated and distributed on the second pay period of each month. Constitutional Officers are paid in equal monthly installments on the 1st and 15th.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 218.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

Work Periods

The work week for County employees is a seven (7) day period beginning on Monday at 12:00 a.m. midnight and continuing to the following Sunday at 11:59 p.m.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 214.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL INFORMATION

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer service happens everywhere, and it must start from within. Know your internal and external customers. Demonstrate your pride by providing outstanding service to the citizens of Brooks County and the general public.

OTHER POLICIES

The *Finance and Procurement Policy* is located in the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia* and is available from the Human Resources Coordinator, Department Heads or the County Administrator.

The *Health and Safety Policy* is located in the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County Georgia* and is available from the Human Resources Coordinator, Department Heads or the County Administrator.

The *Information Technology Policy* is located in the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County Georgia* and is available from the Human Resources Coordinator, Department Heads or the County Administrator.

Holidays

Employees receive time off with pay for the following holidays: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Veterans Day, Thanksgiving Day, day after Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Washington's Birthday, and one personal day (birthday day). Brooks County observes all State Holidays.

Prior to relying on any representation made in this section, please consult Policy Number 226.1 of the *Comprehensive Policy Manual for Brooks County, Georgia*.

Board of Commissioners
Constitutional Officers and Elected Officials

The Brooks County organizational structure is described in the following brief outline.

ELECTORATE - The electorate consists of the registered voters in the county.

ELECTED OFFICIALS - Elected officials include the Board of Commissioners, Clerk of Superior Court, Coroner, Magistrate Court Judge, Probate Court Judge, Sheriff and Tax Commissioner.

STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES - Offices funded in full or in part by the State or Federal Government are Regional Development Center, Natural Resources Conservation Services, Community Health Center, Family and Children Services, Forestry Services, Health Department, M.R.H.R. Substance Abuse Board, Extension Services and Juvenile Court.

BOARDS AND AUTHORITIES – The Board of Commissioners appoints county citizens to advisory boards and special purpose authorities.

COMMISSION APPOINTED POSITIONS - The County Administrator, County Attorney and County Clerk are appointed by the Board of Commissioners. The County Administrator serves as the Chief Administrative Officer of the County.

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