



*A Provider of Mental Health, Addiction and  
Developmental Disability Services*

# Employee Handbook

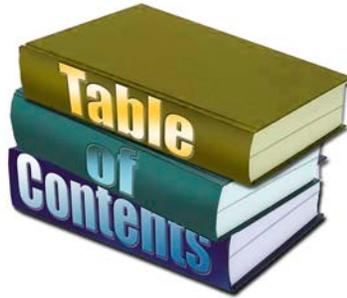
Updated August 2016



Welcome to the team at the Cobb and Douglas Community Services Board! I am excited to have you. As an employee of the Agency, you are part of team helping individuals with significant challenges in their lives. Our goal is to provide these individuals with outstanding, recovery-centered care. You are a vital part of team to help us meet that goal. Thank you for your service. Together, we make this Agency a place where Recovery is Possible.

Sincerely,

Bryan G. Stephens  
Interim Executive Director



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**Employee Acknowledgement Form (last page)**

## Employee Welcome Statement

Welcome to Cobb/Douglas Community Services Board!

This agency is a model agency for quality care in Mental Health, Addictive Services, and Intellectual Developmental Disabilities. As an employee of the Cobb/Douglas CSB, you will be expected to exemplify excellence and quality of service and care. By following the employee policies and procedures outlined in this handbook, you will be well on your way to meeting the goal of excellence and quality. This handbook is just a broad tool for conduct. You will be oriented on more specific policy and procedures through our on-going professional development to help guide decision-making and best practices.



### Philosophy of Care

“To maximize customer satisfaction and client outcomes through respectful, evidence-based treatment and interventions, with responsible use of resources.”

### Core Values

- Individual Empowerment
- Passion for Innovation and Integrity
- Customer-driven Care and Supports
- Focus on Community

### Preface

An interesting and challenging experience awaits you as an employee of Cobb/Douglas Community Service Boards. State government has undergone substantial changes in recent years, and this handbook should answer some of your questions. This handbook has information about working conditions, employee benefits, and employee responsibilities. You should read, understand, and comply with all provisions. If you have any questions or need additional clarification about anything contained in this handbook, contact your personnel director. No employee handbook can anticipate every circumstance or question about your employment. As our policies change the handbook will be updated. We reserve the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any portion of the handbook as we deem appropriate. Amendments are permitted with the approval of the Executive Director. Employees will, of course, be notified of such changes as they occur.

**This handbook is not intended to be, nor should it be construed to be, a contract of employment.**

Instead, the guidelines in this handbook provide a frame of reference from which deviations may be made as particular circumstances warrant. The handbook was developed by management and may be amended or cancelled at any time, at the agency's sole discretion.



## **An Equal Opportunity Employer**

To provide equal employment and advancement opportunities, we make our employment decisions based on individual qualifications and abilities. Cobb/Douglas does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, or any other characteristic protected by law. This governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

If you have questions or concerns about any type of discrimination in the workplace, please talk to your supervisor or the personnel director. The following federal laws and executive orders apply to all Cobb/Douglas employees.

**Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA):** Prohibits arbitrary age discrimination against employees or applicants age 40 and older. 1986 amendments abolished mandatory retirement of employees of any age.

**Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA):** Prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities and requires employers to provide reasonable accommodation for the known physical or mental limitations of an otherwise qualified applicant or employee. Limits pre-employment physical exams and health-related inquiries.

**Civil Rights Acts of 1964, 1991 (Title VII, CRA '91):** Bans discrimination in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The Civil Rights Act of 1991 amended Title VII and overturned several Supreme Court decisions, thereby strengthening EEO requirements. Gives persons of all races and ethnicities equal rights to make and enforce contracts. "Contracts" includes employment relationships, even without a formal contract.

**Civil Rights Act of 1871 (42 USC §1983) [Section 1983]:** Prohibits state and local officials from discriminating on the basis of race or ethnicity under color of any state statute, ordinance, regulation or custom.

**Equal Pay Act of 1963:** Amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act. Requires employers to pay equal wages, regardless of sex, for work equal in skill, effort and responsibility.

**Executive Order 11246 of 1965 (E.O. 11246):** Bans discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin by federal contractors and subcontractors with at least \$10,000 in contracts. Those with at least 50 employees and \$50,000 in federal contracts must take affirmative action to increase utilization of minorities and women in the workforce.

**Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 (IRCA):** Bars employers from hiring individuals not authorized to work in the United States. Prohibits discrimination on the basis of nationality or citizenship status.

**Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978:** Amended Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Bars employers from discriminating on the basis of pregnancy-related medical conditions. Employers must treat pregnancy the same as any other disability.

**Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Sections 503 and 504) [Rehab Act]:** Under Sections 503 and 504, employers that have federal contracts worth more than \$25,000 or that receive government financial assistance can't discriminate against disabled individuals and must take affirmative action to provide employment opportunities for them.

**Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA):** Employers must reinstate employees returning from cumulative military leave of up to five years to the position and benefits they would have attained had they remained with the employer. Returning military personnel also must receive training as needed to qualify for the position they would have attained had their jobs not been interrupted by military service.

**Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Assistance Act of 1974 (VEVRAA):** Federal contractors and subcontractors must take affirmative action to hire and promote veterans and disabled veterans (not limited to the Vietnam era) and Vietnam-era veterans or the disabled).



## Employee Practices

### Employment Status

Cobb/Douglas employees are either "classified" or "unclassified" staff.

**Unclassified** - serves on an "at-will" basis meaning either you or Cobb/Douglas may end your employment at any time, for any reason, and without any notice. All newly created positions and newly hired employees are hired "at-will" or in unclassified positions. Unclassified employees are not covered by the Rules of the State Personnel Board and cannot appeal employment actions. Unclassified employees who move to another position remain unclassified regardless of the status of the position.

**Classified** - subject to the Rules of the State Personnel Board and may appeal some employment actions

for disciplinary reasons, such as suspension without pay, demotion, salary reduction, or termination. Classified employees may remain classified unless you accept an unclassified position. When you move to another position in the classified service (through promotion, transfer, or demotion), you remain classified. A new working test period, however, will be required for promotions, and in some cases, transfers. Classified employees that move to a position in the unclassified service, will become unclassified and cannot regain classified status at a later date.

### Emergency Closings

At times, emergencies such as severe weather, fires, power failures, or floods can disrupt Cobb/Douglas operations. In extreme cases, these emergencies may require some facilities to close. If this occurs outside of your usual working hours, local radio and/or television stations will be asked to broadcast the closing. Emergencies can affect some areas while not affecting others. The Director may excuse employees who are directly affected by the emergency for whatever time may be necessary if conditions warrant closing of an office or facility. However, if your office or facility is not closed due to emergency conditions, the Director may choose any of the following options:

1. Allow you to make up the time lost. For FLSA non-exempt employees, the time must be made up within the same work week; for exempt employees, within 15 workdays after the absence.
2. Allow you to charge the absence to accrued compensatory time, personal leave, annual leave, or PTO (paid time off).
3. Place you on leave without pay if neither of the previous options is available.

### Timekeeping

Cobb/Douglas is required to keep accurate records of the work time of nonexempt employees. Non-exempt employees are responsible for recording the time they begin and end their work, as well as the start and end time of each meal period. This is used to calculate employee pay and benefits. Non-exempt employees are not permitted to do work at home nor work outside of scheduled hours.

Employees may be disciplined for altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, recording another employee's time, sharing their passwords with others, failure to accurately record time worked, or working non-scheduled hours.

**Overtime** - Overtime compensation may take two forms: pay and compensatory time. The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) governs whether an employee is eligible for overtime pay. Under the FLSA, employees are designated as either *nonexempt* or *exempt* from overtime compensation. *Nonexempt* employees are entitled to overtime when more than 40 hours are worked in a 7-day work period. *Exempt* employees are not entitled to overtime compensation.

Employees are also designated as either *nonexempt* or *exempt* under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for purposes of overtime compensation.

*Nonexempt* employees are entitled to overtime compensation.

*Exempt* employees are not entitled to overtime compensation.

If you are *nonexempt* and are required to work more than 40 hours in a 7-day period, you will either be given compensatory time off or be paid overtime at the rate of "time and a half." The official agency work week is defined as midnight Saturday to midnight Saturday.

Overtime is based on actual hours worked. Time off for holidays, sick leave, vacation leave, or any other leave of absence is not considered hours worked for overtime calculations. All overtime work for *nonexempt* employees must be authorized in advance by your Director. **Working overtime without advance approval may result in disciplinary action.** Non-exempt employees are not permitted to perform work at home nor work outside of scheduled hours.

**Paydays** - Most employees are paid twice each month, on the 15th and last work day of the month. If a payday falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, paychecks are generally issued on the preceding workday. Direct deposit of employee pay is available. Employees must give written authorization to participate in direct deposit and will receive itemized statements of their wages.

**Administrative Pay Correction** - Cobb/Douglas takes all reasonable steps to ensure that employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck and that employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday. If there is an error in the amount of your pay, you should promptly notify the supervisor so that corrections can be made as quickly as possible.

**Payroll Deductions** - Cobb/Douglas is required to make certain deductions from every employee's pay. Among these are federal and state income taxes. Social Security taxes are deducted up to a limit that is called the Social Security "wage base." Cobb/Douglas matches the amount of Social Security tax paid by each employee.

**Performance Management Process** - Cobb/Douglas Community Service Boards uses the Georgia Performance Management Process, which runs from July 1 through June 30 each year.

**Personnel Files** - Personnel files are maintained in the Cobb/Douglas personnel office. These files include such information as your job application, resume, training records, performance evaluations, salary increases, disciplinary actions, and promotions.

Personnel files are the property of Cobb/Douglas. Generally, only supervisors and management who have a legitimate reason to review information in a file are allowed to do so. Because you are a public employee, some information in your personnel file may be accessed through a request under the Open Records Act. Other information, such as medical information, is considered confidential and is not open to the public. This information is maintained in separate confidential files. However, supervisors and other managers who have a legitimate business need for this confidential information may view these files.

**Viewing Your Personnel File** - Employees who wish to review their own file should contact the Human Resources Director. With reasonable advance notice, employees may review their own personnel file in the personnel office and in the presence of an individual assigned to maintain the files. If you transfer to another state agency, your personnel file will transfer with you to your new agency's personnel office.

**Personal Data Changes** - If you change your name, address, telephone number, emergency contact, or if your marital status or number of dependents changes, you should notify your personnel office as soon as possible. Promptly reporting these changes will keep your personnel file current and will prevent delays in processing important tax and benefit information. Be especially careful to report all changes in beneficiaries for retirement and insurance purposes. It is your responsibility to keep your insurance and retirement records up to date. You should contact Georgia Breeze/SHBP immediately with any changes in your family situation.

## Resignations

Resignation is a voluntary act initiated by an employee to end employment with Cobb/Douglas. Although advance notice is not required, it is customary and considered professional to provide at least two weeks' written resignation notice.

***Voluntary Separations*** - The following circumstances may result in an employee being separated from employment. These separations are considered voluntary separations or forfeitures of employment.

1. Failing to hold and maintain a license (including a driver's license) or certificate required by law or regulation
2. Engaging in prohibited political activity or conflicting employment
3. Falsifying or misrepresenting information regarding credentials, qualifications, or other records that directly impact the hiring decision
4. Being absent from work for 3 consecutive workdays or equivalent, without proper approval
5. Failing to return to work at the end of a leave of absence

***Classified employees*** - who are separated for these reasons may appeal the separations to the State Personnel Board. The following circumstances may result in separation from employment. However, these separations cannot be appealed.

1. Being absent from work for 5 consecutive workdays or equivalent after all sick and annual leave is used
2. When a suitable vacancy is not available at the end of a contingent leave of absence



## **Employee Benefits**

Eligible employees are provided a wide range of benefits. Many of these benefits (social security, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, etc.) apply to all employees. Your eligibility for other benefits depends on the eligibility requirements established by the benefits plans.

Some of these benefits are described in this handbook. Others can be found in the Decision Guide. The Human Resources Department can help you determine which of the following benefits apply to you.

- Accidental Death and Dismemberment
- Blood Donation Time
- Court/Jury Leave
- Deferred Compensation Plans 401(k) and 457
- Dental Insurance
- Dependent Life Insurance
- Disability Insurance, Short- and Long-Term
- Family Medical Leave
- Health Insurance
- Holidays
- Legal Insurance
- Life Insurance
- Long Term Care Insurance
- Military Leave
- Spending Accounts
- Supplemental Life Insurance
- Paid Leave
- Voting Time Off

***Flexible Benefits Program*** - The State Flexible Benefits Program provides you with a variety of benefits options. Many can be purchased with pretax dollars. The cost of many of these flexible benefits is deducted prior to determining your taxable pay, which may reduce your income taxes. Benefits include options for health insurance, accidental death and dismemberment insurance, additional life insurance and dependent life insurance, short- and long-term disability insurance, dental insurance, legal insurance, and spending account options.

Once you are enrolled, you are given an opportunity to change coverage or change options during the open enrollment period of each year. Changes that are made during this period are effective on January 1. Some events like marriage, deaths, and so forth, make you eligible for changes in coverage at times other than open enrollment.

***Health Insurance Benefits*** - One of the valuable benefits offered to Cobb/Douglas employees is the protection against significant financial loss when you or your dependents need medical care for an illness or injury. The State Health Benefit Plan (SHBP) is a self-insured program administered by the Department of Community Health.

Coverage for all benefits begins the first day of the month following completion of one full calendar month of employment. Payroll deductions for health benefits are made during the month prior to coverage. You will normally be covered by the Plan for the following month after your last payroll deduction.

***Benefits Continuation (COBRA)*** - Employees are allowed to continue their health insurance coverage under the State health plan in some cases when coverage would normally be lost. The federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) may entitle you and your qualified dependents to a temporary extension of coverage for certain qualifying events. These events include your resignation, leave of absence, or a reduction in your hours. Your dependent child may also extend coverage if your coverage ends or if your dependent child's coverage ends. Under COBRA, the employee or dependent must pay the full cost of coverage at the State's group rate. An administration fee must also

be paid. The State Health Benefit Plan provides you with a written notice describing your rights under COBRA when your loss of eligibility is reported. The notice contains important information about your rights and obligations. Contact the personnel office or the State Health Benefit Plan for more detailed information.

***Deferred Compensation Program*** - Deferred compensation is a voluntary program that allows you to put aside a portion of your current salary into a 401(k) Plan or a Section 457 Plan before state and federal income taxes are deducted. This deferred salary is invested in one or more of the investment options offered under the program plan. The deferred compensation, and any investment earnings from it, will not be taxed as income until it is actually distributed to you in the future, usually when you retire or leave employment.

This allows employees to build financial security, especially for retirement, beyond what their retirement or pension plans may offer. Your personnel office can provide you with more detailed information about the Deferred Compensation Program or any other benefit provided in the Flexible Benefits Program.

### Leave Benefits

***Holidays (Full-time employees only)*** - Eligible Cobb/Douglas employees enjoy nine (9) paid holidays each year.

New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr's Birthday	January, third Monday
Robert E. Lee's Birthday	Observed in November
Washington's Birthday	Observed in December
Memorial Day	May, last Monday
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	September, first Monday
Thanksgiving Day	November, fourth Thursday
Christmas Day	December 25

Full-time employees who are scheduled to work on a holiday will be given an equal time off on another day. To be eligible for a paid holiday, you must be in pay status either the day before and the day after the holiday and you must have worked your scheduled shifts both before and after the holiday. Being in pay status means that you are at work or on approved paid leave. Part-time employees are not eligible for paid holidays.

***Annual Leave (ERS Employees Only)*** - Annual leave is available to provide opportunities for vacations or personal pursuits. Regular full-time employees who are members of the Employee Retirement System (ERS) are eligible to earn and use annual leave. Part-time employees are not eligible for paid vacation days (annual leave).

The amount of annual leave you receive each year increases with the length of your continuous employment as shown below.

- For the first 5 years, employees receive 15 vacation days each year (10 hours monthly)
- After 5 years of service, employees receive 18 vacation days each year (12 hours monthly)
- After 10 years of service, employees receive 21 vacation days each year (14 hours monthly)

You may accumulate a maximum of 45 days (360 hours) annual leave. Any hours earned above 360 are forfeited (see **Forfeited Leave** section). When you retire or leave State government employment, you will

be paid for any unused annual leave up to the 360-hour maximum.

Annual leave may be taken with the approval of your supervisor. To take annual leave, employees should request advance approval as early as possible. This allows your supervisor to coordinate your request with other absences and minimize disruption in work. Your supervisor will take into account a number of factors, including business needs and staffing requirements. Employees are not permitted to donate their leave hours, of any kind, to other employees.

***Sick Leave (ERS Employees Only)*** - Sick leave benefits are available to provide income protection during times of illness, disability, or for routine doctor's appointments. Regular full-time employees are eligible to earn and use sick leave. Part-time employees are not eligible for paid sick leave.

Sick leave accrues at the rate of 10 hours per month (15 days annually). The accrual rate never increases and when you leave employment, you will not be paid for your sick leave balance. However, because sick leave is meant to be income protection in case of long-term illness or disability, you can save up to 720 hours (90 days). Anything over 720 hours is forfeited (see **Forfeited Leave** section).

Sick leave may be used with approval of your supervisor for the following reasons.

- Personal illness or disability
- Absence needed because of exposure to contagious disease when exposure would endanger the health of others
- Dental or medical care
- Absence due to dental or medical care, illness, accident, or death in your immediate family that requires your presence

For the purpose of sick leave utilization, immediate family means your spouse, child, parent, brother, or sister. It also includes anyone else who lives with you and is recognized by law as your dependent. When the need for sick leave is foreseeable, such as with routine doctor or dental appointments, you should request the time off as far in advance as possible. Employees who are unable to report to work without prior approval must notify their supervisor prior to their scheduled starting time.

Keep in mind that your sick leave can protect your income during illnesses or disabilities for up to 90 workdays, depending on the number of hours you maintain. This is full income protection. Although you may purchase short-term disability insurance through your flexible benefits program, there is a 30-day waiting period *before* you can receive a *portion* of your salary. Employees are not permitted to donate their leave hours, of any kind, to other employees.

***Forfeited Leave (ERS Employees Only)*** - You can save up to 45 days (360 hours) of annual leave and up to 90 days (720 hours) of sick leave. Any hours you earn over these amounts are forfeited. However, a record of your forfeited leave is maintained by Cobb/Douglas.

What is the value of forfeited leave to you?

- ***Free long-term disability insurance*** - In the case of a long-term disability, your forfeited leave may be restored to you on an as-needed basis. This would provide you full income protection. The long-term disability insurance available through the flexible benefits program has a 180-day waiting period *before* you could receive a *portion* of your salary.
- ***Retirement credit*** - For members of the Employees' Retirement System, forfeited leave can be used to extend your years of service so that you can retire earlier. When you have at least 120 days of

forfeited sick and annual leave combined with your sick leave balance, this benefit would apply. Keep in mind that if you have saved the maximum of 720 hours of sick leave that already equals 90 days.

***Personal Leave (ERS Employees Only)*** - Each year, between November 30 and December 31, eligible employees who accrue sick leave have the opportunity to convert some of their sick leave to personal leave. If you have over 120 hours of sick leave, you can convert up to 24 hours in excess of 120 hours to personal leave. Once you convert the hours to personal leave, you cannot change your mind.

Your personal leave then becomes available to use during the following calendar year. If you don't use it by December 31st you lose it. Personal leave can be used for any reason you wish. Although you must get approval to use personal leave, your supervisor will make a reasonable effort to accommodate your request to use it.

***Paid Time Off (PTO) (Non-ERS Employees Only)*** - Paid Time Off (PTO) is available to non-ERS employees for vacations, personal pursuits, illness, medical appointments, and other reasons. Regular full-time employees who are not members of the Employee Retirement System (ERS) are eligible to earn and use PTO. Part-time employees are not eligible for PTO.

The amount of PTO you receive each year increases with the length of your continuous employment as shown below.

- 0<2 years of service, employees receive 15 PTO days each year (10 hours monthly).
- 2<4 years of service, employees receive 18 PTO days each year (12 hours monthly)
- 4<6 years of service, employees receive 21 PTO days each year (14 hours monthly)
- 6<8 years of service, employees receive 24 PTO days each year (16 hours monthly)
- 8<10 years of service, employees receive 27 PTO days each year (18 hours monthly)
- After 10 years of service, employees receive 30 PTO days each year (20 hours monthly).

You may accumulate a maximum of 60 days (480 hours) of PTO. Upon termination of employment, a maximum of 360 hours PTO will be paid out to the employee. Employees are not permitted to donate their leave hours, of any kind, to other employees.

PTO may only be taken with the approval of your supervisor. To take PTO, employees should request advance approval as early as possible. This allows your supervisor to coordinate your request with other absences and minimize disruption in work. Your supervisor will take into account a number of factors, including business needs and staffing requirements.

Three (3) days of PTO will be credited back to the employee if an employee provides satisfactory documentation that the purpose of the leave is a death in the employee's immediate family. For the purposes of this type of bereavement leave, immediate family includes the following: spouse, parent, stepparent, siblings, stepsiblings, children, stepchildren, grandparent, father-in-law, mother-in-law, brother-in-law, sister-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, or grandchild.

***Family Leave*** - After working for the agency for at least 12 months and at least 1250 hours, employees become eligible for absences covered by the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).

A serious health condition means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility or continuing treatment

by a health care provider.

When the leave is foreseeable, such as with childbirth or elective surgery, employees must make requests for family leave to their supervisors at least 30 days in advance. If the leave is not foreseeable, employees should request family leave as soon as possible.

Requests for leave for serious health conditions must include a health care provider's statement certifying the need for the leave and its beginning and expected ending dates. At the end of a leave taken for an employee's own serious health condition, the employee may be required to provide certification that the employee is able to resume work.

Family leave for serious health conditions will be limited to what is medically necessary as determined by the health care provider. However, family leave absences are limited to a total of 12 weeks each rolling year. Any combination of circumstances qualifying for family leave may not exceed this maximum limit.

When a husband and wife both work for Cobb/Douglas, the two employees are limited to a combined total of 12 weeks of family leave to cover the time off they need after the birth or placement of a child or to care for a seriously ill parent. However, each employee is eligible to take any unused portion of the 12 weeks for his or her own serious health condition, the care of a seriously ill child or the care of the other spouse.

**Temporary Disability Leave** - Temporary disabilities may include inpatient care in a hospital, hospice, or residential medical care facility, continuing treatment by a health care provider, and temporary disabilities associated with pregnancy, or childbirth. These disabilities are covered by Family Leave whenever an employee meets the eligibility requirements as defined in **Family Leave**.

Employees who are not eligible for family leave may be eligible for temporary disability leave. Temporary disability leave may be granted to the extent of the employee's paid leave balances (sick, annual, or personal). If the absence exceeds the employee's paid leave balances, the absence may be leave without pay.

ERS Employees who have forfeited sick and annual leave may request that forfeited leave be restored to continue paid leave to cover the period of the illness or disability. The amount of leave restored is limited by the period of disability as determined by the employee's doctor.

**Military Leave** - A military leave of absence will be granted to employees who are absent from work because of service in the U.S. uniformed services according to the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). Advance notice of military service is required, unless military necessity prevents such notice or it is otherwise impossible or unreasonable.

Military leave applies when employees are ordered to military duty or required to attend service schools. The length of the absence is determined by the orders.

Each federal fiscal year (October 1 through September 30), employees are allowed up to 18 paid workdays when the duty is for 30 days or less. Any duty over 30 days is considered military leave but will be without pay for the entire period of absence unless the employee elects to use accumulated annual leave, personal leave, or compensatory time.

If you are a member of the National Guard and the Governor declares an emergency and orders National Guard members to state active duty, you are allowed up to 30 days of paid leave in any one federal fiscal year.

Employees will be allowed time off to take a physical or fitness exam for military service. The absence can be charged to annual leave; otherwise, the absence will be leave without pay.

A military leave of absence is treated as continuous employment. Employees returning from military leave will be placed in the position, or a comparable one, they would have attained had they remained continuously employed depending on the length of military service according to USERRA. They will be treated as continuously employed for purposes of determining benefits based on length of service.

**Blood Donation Time** - Employees wishing to donate blood are allowed up to 2 hours of time away from work 4 times each calendar year. If you donate blood platelets or granulocytes through the pheresis process, you can receive up to 4 hours per donation 4 times annually. Your supervisor will decide the most appropriate time for you to be away from work to donate. Blood donation time covers your absence while away from work for the sole purpose of donating blood.

**Court Leave** - Employees are encouraged to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury duty when required. If you are summoned to jury duty or subpoenaed as a witness, you may request court leave. You should provide a copy of the subpoena, summons, or other court order as soon as possible so that your supervisor may make arrangements for the absence. Of course, you are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits. The time you are allowed includes any additional time as reasonably needed to prepare for or recuperate from the court duty. **Important:** Court leave does not apply if you are a principal party in the proceeding. It also does not apply if you have any other personal or family interest in the proceeding. To avoid double compensation with public funds if you receive paid court leave you are expected to forward any pay received from the courts to the CSB.

**Kidney Donation Leave** - Employees who wish to donate a kidney for a kidney transplant will receive a 30-day leave of absence with pay to do so. This leave is not charged to your PTO, sick, or annual leave balances. Employees requesting leave to donate a kidney must provide a statement from the doctor performing the transplant or from the hospital administrator. If the donation does not occur, regardless of the reason, this leave will not apply to the absence.

**Voting Time** - Cobb/Douglas Community Service Boards encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by voting in elections. Generally, employees can find time to vote either before or after work. If you are not able to vote due to your work schedule, your supervisor may grant up to 2 hours of paid time off to vote. Employees should request time off from their supervisor as soon as possible before Election Day. Advance notice is required so that the time off can be scheduled at the beginning or end of the work shift, whichever is least disruptive to the work schedule.

**Retirement** - Employees hired after July 1, 1994 may qualify for membership in the Employees' Qualified Trust Deferred Compensation Plan, known as the 401(k) Plan. The Plan allows for employer contributions and optional payroll deducted employee deferrals.

To qualify, employees must be full-time employees or part-time or temporary employees working 1000 hours or more annually. Employees must also be ineligible for coverage in the Employees' Retirement System to qualify to participate in the 401 (k) Plan. Employees transferring from State mental health operations maintain any existing retirement coverage through the Employees' Retirement System.

Those CSB employees not eligible to participate in the 401(k) Plan may be eligible to make elective

salary deferrals to the State Deferred Compensation Section 457 Plan.

**Training Opportunities** - The key to Georgia's ability to provide the best service to its citizens is a well-trained workforce. Training and professional development provide State employees with the tools to maintain existing skills and develop new ones. Many jobs require mandatory training to develop or maintain knowledge and skills that are critical to the performance of your job duties. Your supervisor will discuss these training requirements with you.

Employees wanting more information about available training opportunities should see their supervisors.

**Workers' Compensation** - Workers' Compensation is an accident insurance program. It provides medical care, rehabilitation and income in place of lost wages when employees sustain job-related injuries or illnesses. It also provides payment to dependents if you die from a job-related accident. Your workers' compensation coverage begins on the first day you start work.

Workers' Compensation is administered by the Department of Administrative Services Risk Management Unit. Coverage includes all authorized hospital bills, doctor bills, physical therapy, medical/vocational rehabilitation, and necessary travel expenses according to the Workers' Compensation fee schedule.

The State of Georgia's Workers' Compensation Program covers the following employees

- full-time employees
- part-time employees
- hourly and salaried employees
- county health departments
- state policy-making boards (such as The Board of Regents)

If you are injured on the job, it is your responsibility to report the injury **immediately** to your supervisor. If you wait longer than 30 days to report an injury, your workers' compensation benefits may be jeopardized. If you miss more than seven days because of your injury, you will get some payment for lost wages. You will not get paid for the first seven days, however, unless you miss 21 straight days of work. You may choose to have lost time covered by paid leave instead of Workers' Compensation (see also Special Injury Leave section). This option will provide coverage for your full salary while on leave. However, **you must request such action in writing**. You cannot have your full salary covered by sick or annual leave while receiving Workers' Compensation benefits for lost time. You may choose only one option. Selecting full salary in lieu of Workers' Compensation benefits does not jeopardize medical or rehabilitation benefits provided under Workers' Compensation.

**Return-To-Work Benefit Program** - The State of Georgia has a Return-to-Work Program to help injured employees return to their former jobs. It uses transitional assignments suited to the employee's injury and work ability. Research has shown that injured employees who return to work faster heal more quickly. The sooner an employee returns to work the sooner he or she can return to full-time status.

**Permanent Restrictions of Employees** - Unfortunately, there may be times when an employee never fully recovers from an injury or illness. In those situations the employee's essential job function is reviewed and compared with the permanent restrictions documented by the doctor. In many cases, permanent restrictions do not affect an employee's ability to do his or her job at full productivity. However, if the restrictions affect the employee's essential job functions, attempts will be made to identify a reasonable accommodation for the employee.



## Employee Conduct

***Attendance and Punctuality*** - To maintain a safe and productive work environment, Cobb/Douglas Community Service Boards expects employees to be reliable and to be punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Absenteeism and tardiness place a burden on other employees and the agency. Employees are expected to be on the job, on time, every day that they are scheduled to work. Wherever possible, employees should schedule all medical and personal appointments outside of work hours.

In the rare instances when you will be absent due to illness or emergency, you must inform your supervisor and keep the supervisor informed of when you likely will return to work. You are expected to call personally and talk directly with the supervisor prior to your scheduled starting time. Unless you are physically unable to make the telephone call yourself, you should not rely on friends, relatives, or coworkers to communicate your absence to your supervisor. Calling in to report your absence or late arrival does not mean that your absence is approved. Your supervisor will consider your request for approval when you return to work. Attendance and punctuality are considered in every employee's performance evaluation. Poor attendance and excessive tardiness are disruptive. Either may lead to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

***Code of Ethics*** - The successful reputation of Cobb/Douglas is built on the principles of fair dealing and ethical conduct of our employees. Our reputation for integrity and excellence requires that we observe the spirit and letter of all applicable laws and regulations, as well as maintain the highest standards of conduct and personal integrity.

The continued success of Cobb/Douglas depends on our customers' trust and we are dedicated to preserving that trust. Employees owe a duty to the State of Georgia, its customers, and citizens to act in a way that will merit the continued trust and confidence of the public.

Cobb/Douglas expects its managers, supervisors, and employees to conduct business following the letter and spirit of all relevant laws and to refrain from any illegal, dishonest, or unethical conduct. In general, the use of good judgment, based on high ethical principles, will guide you. However, if you find it difficult to determine the proper course of action in a situation, discuss the matter with your immediate supervisor and, if necessary, with your personnel director.

The State of Georgia adopted a code of ethics to guide public employees in their roles and responsibilities as State employees. The following is generally what is expected of you.

**CODE OF ETHICS FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICE  
(O.C.G.A. 45-10-1)**

Any person in government service should:

1. Put loyalty to the highest moral principles and to country above loyalty to persons, party, or government department.
2. Uphold the Constitution, laws, and legal regulations of the United States and the State of Georgia and of all governments therein and never be a party to their evasion.
3. Give a full day's labor for a full day's pay and give to the performance of his duties his earnest effort and best thought.
4. Seek to find and employ more efficient and economical ways of getting tasks accomplished.
5. Never discriminate unfairly by the dispensing of special favors or privileges to anyone, whether for remuneration or not and never accept, for himself or his family, favors or benefits under circumstances which might be construed by reasonable persons as influencing the performance of his governmental duties.
6. Make no private promises of any kind binding upon the duties of office, since a government employee has no private word which can be binding on public duty.
6. Engage in no business with the government, either directly or indirectly, which is inconsistent with the conscientious performance of his governmental duties.
8. Never use any information coming to him confidentially in the performance of governmental duties as a means for making private profit.
9. Expose corruption wherever discovered.
10. Uphold these principles, ever conscious that public office is a public trust.

***Conflicts of Interest*** - The term "conflict of interest" refers to a situation in which an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in a personal gain for that employee or for a relative or friend as a result of the business dealings.

Employees must conduct the business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. You should not use privileged or confidential information for your own financial gain or to provide friends, relatives, or acquaintances with any financial advantage. If you have direct and substantial outside financial interests that could be affected by State plans or activities and you are directly involved in such plans or activities, you should immediately inform your supervisor. These are only guidelines that provide general direction about potential conflicts of interest. You should contact the personnel director for more information about acceptable standards of operation.

***Political Activity*** - All government employees, of course, keep their constitutional rights such as voting. However, federal and state laws do limit our political activity. These laws preserve integrity within State government. They protect us from undue political pressure, influence or coercion, as well as preserve our right to participate in the political process.

As a classified Cobb/Douglas employee and private citizen, you may:

1. Register and vote in any election.
2. Promote and encourage others to exercise their right to vote.
3. Express a personal opinion privately and publicly on political candidates and issues, provided that any public expression does not conflict with any laws or policies.
4. Display a political picture, badge, or button as long as such display is not under color of office or while you are on duty or on State property.
5. Display a political bumper sticker on a privately owned vehicle unless the State is paying transportation mileage on that vehicle.
6. Be elected or appointed to any office of a political party, political group, or political subdivision of the state, as long as the office is not full time, does not conflict with your official duties, and is not prohibited by law.
7. Take part in the nonpartisan activities of a civic, community, social, professional, employee, or similar organization.

8. Be a member of a political party or other political group and take part in its activities to the extent permitted by federal and state law or policy.
9. Attend partisan and nonpartisan political meetings and rallies as a **spectator**.
10. Sign a petition for specific legislative action or place a candidate's name on an election ballot.
11. Be active in connection with constitutional amendments, referenda, municipal ordinances, or other questions or issues of a similar character.
12. Serve as a nonpartisan paid worker at the polls.
13. Participate fully in public affairs in a manner that does not compromise your efficiency or integrity as a State employee, or the neutrality, efficiency or integrity of your agency.
14. Write a personal letter to a newspaper or other publication expressing a personal view on public issues.
15. Contribute to a governmental program for financing federal, state or local elections as permitted by federal or state law.
16. Manage or participate in your own campaign for any office permitted by law or policy. Contribute to and accept contributions to that campaign.

As a **classified** Cobb/Douglas employee, you cannot:

1. Be a candidate for nomination, election or appointment to any:
  - (1) Full-time elective public office of a political subdivision of Georgia or another state;
  - (2) Full-time elective office of a political party or political organization;
  - (3) Elective state office of Georgia or any other state;
  - (4) Elective civil office of the federal government.
2. Direct, manage, control or participate in a political campaign except as permitted by law or policy.
3. Serve as a watcher, challenger or similar partisan worker at the polls.
4. Use any coercive political pressure to get you or another person an appointment, promotion, pay increase or any other employment advantage in the Merit System.
5. Use any official authority to affect the political action of another person or to affect an election for public office, political party office, or an office of a political organization.
6. Give money to or raise money for a political organization except as permitted by laws or policies.
7. Directly or indirectly tell any employee under the Merit System to give money or anything else of value to anyone for political purposes.
8. Participate in any form of political activity while on duty or under color of office.
9. Engage in any political activity in violation of federal or state law.
10. Endorse candidates other than yourself or oppose candidates other than your opponents in elections for public office or political party.
11. Address a convention, caucus, rally, or similar gathering in support of candidates other than yourself or in opposition to candidates other than your opponents for public office or political party.
12. Circulate a recall petition.
13. Transport any political campaign materials, solicit votes, or transport anyone who is soliciting votes while traveling in a vehicle that the State is paying mileage for.

***The Federal Hatch Act*** - The Federal Hatch Act applies to Cobb/Douglas employees whose positions are financed in part or entirely by the Federal government. If you are covered by this Act, you may not:

1. Use your authority to interfere with or affect the result of an election or nomination for office.
2. Coerce (either directly or indirectly), attempt to coerce, command or advise a State employee or local official to pay, lend or contribute anything of value to a political party, committee, organization, agency, or person for political purposes.
3. Be a candidate for elective public office in a partisan election (which may include some part-time offices of local subdivisions of the state).

Because applicable laws and policies may differ from agency to agency, please discuss your specific situation with your supervisor or personnel office.

***Outside Employment*** -As a Cobb/Douglas employee, you are expected to devote your entire work hours to your job and to the business of Cobb/Douglas. Outside employment that constitutes a conflict of interest is prohibited. Your supervisor must be made aware other employment. The *other employment form* must be filled out and approved by Human Resources.

***Conflict Resolution*** - Cobb/Douglas is committed to providing the best possible working conditions for our employees. We encourage open and frank discussions of any problem, complaint, suggestion, or question. If you have a concern about your working conditions or employment, you should first seek resolution through open and honest communications with supervisors or other employees involved in the issues.

Not every problem can be resolved to everyone's total satisfaction, but only through understanding and discussion of mutual problems can employees and management develop confidence in each other. This confidence is important in maintaining an efficient and harmonious work environment.

If you believe a condition of employment or a management decision affecting you is unjust or inequitable, you should contact the personnel director to request a copy of the employee grievance procedure appropriate to your employment status (classified or unclassified).

You should be aware there is a time limit for filing grievances, usually within 10 workdays. After filing a grievance, you may discontinue the process at any step.

***Discipline*** - Employees are expected to devote work time to work, meet all work standards, and conduct themselves appropriately. Failure to do so can result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. The major purpose of any disciplinary action is to correct the problem, prevent recurrence, and prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future. Corrective action is determined by Cobb/Douglas' discipline policy. You should discuss our agency's specific policy with your supervisor or contact the personnel director.

However, there are some behaviors or problems that are serious enough to justify either a suspension, or, in extreme situations, dismissal without going through disciplinary steps. While it is not possible to list every behavior or problem that might be grounds for disciplinary action, a sample list can be found in.

### ***Standards of Conduct: Appeals***

Classified employees may appeal the following disciplinary actions to the State Personnel Board:

- suspensions without pay
- salary reductions
- demotions
- dismissals

Other actions that may be appealed by classified employees can be found in Rule 14 of the State Personnel Board at the following web site: [www.doas.ga.gov](http://www.doas.ga.gov)

Reprimands may also be addressed through an agency's internal review procedure or the agency's grievance process. Check your agency's policy to determine which process is available to you.

Unclassified employees are not eligible to appeal disciplinary or other actions to the State Personnel

Board. Cobb/Douglas hopes most employee problems can be corrected at an early stage, benefiting both the employee and Cobb/Douglas.

***Personal Appearance*** - Appropriate dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness contribute to the morale of all employees and affect the business image Cobb/Douglas presents to customers and visitors. During business hours, employees are expected to present a clean and neat appearance and to dress according to the requirements of their positions. Employees who appear for work inappropriately dressed may be sent home and directed to return to work in proper attire. Consult your supervisor if you have questions about appropriate dress.

***Casual Day*** - We are always searching for new ways to make Cobb/Douglas a better place to work. One way to improve our work environment is to offer our employees the opportunity to dress in casual business wear. Casual dress is a welcome alternative to the formality of typical business clothes. Our goal is to have employees project a professional image while wearing casual and relaxed clothing. Therefore, Fridays are usually designated as casual day. Other days, such as holidays or days before a holiday, may be designated as casual days with prior notice from your supervisor.

Casual business wear encompasses many looks, but it should be considered to be casual clothing that is appropriate for an office environment. It is clothing that allows you to feel comfortable at work, yet always looks clean, neat and professional. However, not all casual clothes are appropriate for work. We ask that you not wear stained, wrinkled, frayed, or revealing clothing to work. If you are considering wearing something that you are not sure is acceptable, choose something else or consult your supervisor first.

***Smoking*** - In keeping with Cobb/Douglas intent to provide a safe and healthful work environment, smoking is prohibited at all agency sites. This applies equally to all employees, customers, and visitors.

***Standards of Conduct*** - Cobb/Douglas employees live in somewhat of a "glass house." We have an obligation not only to our employers, but also to Georgia taxpayers. Consequently, we must adhere to high moral and ethical standards in our professional relationships and personal conduct.

It is virtually impossible to set specific guidelines for every aspect of your job. Each facility has its own rules specific to its operations to ensure a well-run and pleasant working environment. Normally, Cobb/Douglas would not be concerned with your time after work. However, off-duty conduct may become a legitimate concern when it affects agency operations or reflects unfavorably on the agency. As public employees, we must be especially careful to avoid such things as using our positions for personal gain, giving unjustified preferences, losing sight of the need for efficient and impartial decisions in methods of operations, or doing anything which could result in questioning the integrity of our agency. It is impossible to name every act or error that would justify disciplinary action. While not an exhaustive list, the following behaviors are examples of conduct that are not permissible and may result in immediate disciplinary action, including dismissal.

- Negligence or inefficiency in the performance of your assigned duties or job responsibilities, including unacceptable job performance
- Insubordination, including refusing or intentional failure to follow directions of your supervisor, or other designated member of management
- Violations or disregard of any policy, procedure, or federal, state, or local laws affecting the agency or your employment
- Misconduct/behavior which may have a negative effect on the agency's reputation and/or community

standing

- Abusing, misusing, or stealing government property or other employees' property or equipment
- Using or selling alcohol or illegal drugs or reporting for work under the influence of such substances
- Conduct or behavior offensive to other employees or clients/customers
- Profane or vulgar language or written material
- Excessive absenteeism or tardiness, including failure to report for and remain at work without justifiable cause
- Leaving your workstation without authorization
- Conduct or behavior that could endanger yourself or others
- Fighting, horseplay, disorderly or disruptive behavior
- Falsifying documents, such as employment applications, time sheets, reports
- Threatening or abusive language or written material
- Argumentative behavior while on duty or while acting under color of office
- Disclosing confidential information without authorization or accessing confidential information without a business or clinical need
- Illegal or unprofessional behavior such as sexual-related conversations, inappropriate touching, racial or ethnic jokes and slurs, or other verbal or physical conduct of an offensive nature
- Gambling, lending, borrowing or soliciting money or donations of any kind
- Carrying weapons of any kind (knives, firearms, explosives) while on State property, except when required by your job (such as law enforcement officers)
- Failure to maintain required credentials or licensure
- Failure to complete required training in a timely manner
- Failure to immediately report citations, disciplinary actions, loss of credentials, arrests, or convictions to management

***Travel*** - Cobb/Douglas will reimburse employees for reasonable business travel expenses when conducting business away from the normal work location. All business travel must be approved in advance by the immediate supervisor.

When approved, the costs of transportation, meals, lodging, and other business-related expenses will be reimbursed according to travel regulations set by the Office of Planning and Budget and the Department of Audits and Accounts. Employees are expected to limit expenses to reasonable amounts. Employees involved in an accident while traveling on business must promptly report the incident to their immediate supervisor. Vehicles owned, leased, or rented by Cobb/Douglas may not be used for personal use without prior approval.

Employees should discuss with their supervisors the appropriate guidelines for travel arrangements, travel advances, expense reports, reimbursement for specific expenses, or any other business travel issues. Abuse of business travel, including falsifying expense reports to reflect costs not incurred by the employee, can be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal.

***Use of Cobb/Douglas Property*** - Offices, desks, files, and other storage devices are provided for the use of employees during their employment but remain the sole property of Cobb/Douglas. Use all Cobb/Douglas property carefully and properly. This includes telephones, voice mail, fax machines, copiers, computers, supplies, and so forth. Remember that your taxes help pay for all the equipment you use, whether it is a pencil or a car.

Employees are responsible for all Cobb/Douglas property, materials, or written information issued to them or in their possession or control. Using Cobb/Douglas property or funds for personal gain is against the law and may result in disciplinary action or dismissal. Employees are expected to return all Cobb/Douglas property when requested to do so. Cobb/Douglas may take all action deemed appropriate to recover or protect its property. Employees will be charged for non-returned or damaged agency property.

***Computers, Internet, and E-mail*** - Computers, computer files, e-mail system, and software may be available to employees and are intended for business use. Some employees have access to the Internet to help them obtain work-related data and technology.

All computer data, including Internet and e-mail, composed, transmitted, or received is considered part of Cobb/Douglas' official records. Employees should ensure that the business information obtained through this equipment and media is accurate, appropriate, ethical, and lawful.

Data that is composed, transmitted, accessed, or received via the Internet must not contain content that could be considered discriminatory, offensive, obscene, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or disruptive to any employee or other person.

For example, the display or transmission of sexually explicit images, messages, and cartoons is not allowed. Other such misuse includes, but is not limited to, ethnic slurs, racial comments, off-color jokes, or anything that may be construed as harassment or showing disrespect for others.

E-mail may not be used to solicit for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, outside organizations, or other non-business matters.

The equipment, services, and technology provided to access the Internet remain at all times the property of Cobb/Douglas. As such, we reserve the right to monitor Internet traffic. We also reserve the right to retrieve and read any data composed, sent, or received through our online connections and stored in our computer systems. To ensure compliance, computer and e-mail usage may be monitored.

***Equipment and Vehicles*** - Equipment and vehicles essential in accomplishing job duties are expensive and may be difficult to replace. When using Cobb/Douglas property, employees are expected to exercise care, perform required maintenance, and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines.

Please notify your supervisor if equipment, machines, tools, or vehicles appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Prompt reporting of damages, defects, and the need for repairs could prevent deterioration of equipment and possible injury to employees or others. Your supervisor can answer any questions about your responsibility for maintenance and care of equipment or vehicles used on the job.

***Telephones and Mail*** - Telephones are to be used for official Cobb/Douglas business. Personal calls should be reserved for breaks and meal periods. The mail system is reserved for business purposes only. Employees should refrain from sending or receiving personal mail at the workplace.

***Workplace Monitoring*** - Workplace monitoring may be conducted to ensure quality control, employee safety, security, and customer satisfaction.

Employees, particularly those who communicate with customers, may have their telephone conversations monitored or recorded. Telephone monitoring is used to identify and correct performance. Improved job performance enhances our image as well as customers' satisfaction with our service.

Computers and software furnished to employees are the property of Cobb/Douglas. As such, computer usage and files may be monitored or accessed. We are sensitive to the legitimate privacy rights of employees, and will make every effort to guarantee that workplace monitoring is done in an ethical and respectful manner.



## Employee Programs

***Charitable Contributions Program*** - The State Charitable Contributions Program (SCCP) provides employees an opportunity to support eligible charitable organizations using payroll deduction. The SCCP raises millions of dollars that help provide health, welfare, educational and environmental programs and services to the citizens of Georgia.

Charitable organizations are selected for inclusion in the program by the Policy and Education Program Advisory Committees. The charitable organizations that meet the requirements established by law (O.C.G.A. 45-20-50) and the State Personnel Board Rules are eligible to receive contributions.

***Recycling*** - Cobb/Douglas encourages recycling and waste management in its business practices and operating procedures. This support includes a commitment to the purchase, use, and disposal of products and materials in a manner that will best use natural resources and minimize any negative impact on the earth's environment. The simple act of placing a piece of paper, can, or bottle in a recycling container is the first step in reducing demand on the earth's limited resources. Employees are encouraged to make a commitment to recycle and be a part of the solution.

***Partnership for a Smog-Free Georgia*** - Thirteen counties in the Metro-Atlanta area have been directed to reduce ozone emissions during the summer ozone season, which is May 1 through September 30 each year. As a voluntary ozone reduction effort, the goal is to reduce single occupancy vehicle trips during the ozone season. State agencies have developed alternatives to help in this environmental problem that affects all Georgians--not just Metro-Atlanta area residents. We urge you to make plans to help reduce harmful ozone emissions.

Traffic congestion contributes to air pollution and energy waste. To help reduce congestion and improve air quality, Cobb/Douglas encourages employees to seek commute options. Finding alternatives for driving alone to work benefits both employees and the environment. Public transportation is a commute

option that reduces traffic and air pollution. Transit riders eliminate the stress of driving and may even have time to read, sleep, or write while commuting.

Carpooling and vanpooling are convenient options that save money on commute cost and reduce the stress of driving every day in traffic. The number of riders may vary, drivers may rotate, and riders may share expenses. The riders determine the rules.



## **Cobb/Douglas Employment**

***Applications*** - Cobb/Douglas relies upon the accuracy of information in job applications, as well as the accuracy of other data presented throughout the hiring process or later. If you misrepresent, falsify, or omit information, you may be dismissed or no longer considered for employment.

***Background and Credentials Checks*** - It is the desire of Cobb/Douglas to provide a safe environment for clients, patients, customers, and staff. Therefore, a review of criminal history, employment history, credentials, and motor vehicle driving history (if applicable to job), will be completed on all applicants selected for employment. In addition, periodic rechecks of these records will be conducted throughout employment. All employees, contractors, and volunteers are expected to immediately report citations, disciplinary actions, loss of credentials, arrests, or convictions to management.

***Disability Accommodation*** - Cobb/Douglas will comply fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We are committed to ensuring equal employment opportunities for qualified persons with disabilities and will not discriminate in employment practices.

Cobb/Douglas will not discriminate against any qualified employees or applicants and will take all reasonable actions necessary to ensure equal employment opportunity for persons with disabilities as defined by the ADA and all other laws that apply. Hiring procedures will provide persons with disabilities an equal chance at meaningful jobs. Upon request, job applications are available in alternative, accessible formats. Applicants may also get assistance in completing the application. During the hiring process, inquiries are made only to see whether an applicant is able to perform the job. Post-offer physical examinations are required for those positions that have a bona fide job-related physical requirement. The exams are given to everyone entering the position and only after a conditional job offer. Medical records will be kept separate and treated confidentially. Reasonable accommodation will be considered when the disability affects the employee's ability to perform their job.

***Drug-Free Workplace*** - Georgia's Drug-Free Workplace Act promotes a drug-free workplace in all offices and work sites of State government. While on State premises or conducting State business off State

premises, no employee may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.

Under the Drug-Free Workplace Act, an employee who performs work for a government contract or grant must notify his or her supervisor of a criminal conviction for drug-related activity. The report must be made within five days of the conviction.

A drug-free awareness program is available that explains resources available and consequences for violations of the DFWA. Employees are encouraged to discuss these matters with their supervisor or the personnel director to receive assistance or referrals.

***Drug Testing*** - Some positions, such as high-risk positions, safety-sensitive positions, and others previously identified by Cobb/Douglas, require pre-employment and random drug screening as specified by law. Employees in these positions must submit to this testing as a condition of their employment.

Additionally, any employee may be required to submit to screening for the presence of illegal drugs or alcohol if reasonable suspicion exists that the employee has used illegal drugs, or is under the influence of illegal drugs, alcohol, or other substances while on duty. Applicants and employees who refuse to take a drug or alcohol test or who fail a drug or alcohol test will be dismissed and may be disqualified from State employment for two years.

***Employment of Relatives*** - Personal relationships may create an actual or potential conflict of interest, cause disruption, or create a negative or unprofessional work environment. Therefore, relatives of employees will not be eligible for employment when potential problems of supervision, safety, security, or morale exist.

If two employees become subject to these restrictions after they are hired, one or both must seek a transfer that eliminates the actual or potential conflict of interest. When no transfer possibilities exist management may transfer one or both employees.

***Immigration Law Compliance*** - Cobb/Douglas does not unlawfully discriminate on the basis of citizenship or national origin. In compliance with the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, each new employee, as a condition of employment, must complete the Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9. New employees must present satisfactory documents establishing identity and employment eligibility. Former employees who are rehired must also complete the form if:

- They have not completed an I-9 with Cobb/Douglas within the past three years, or
- If their previous I-9 is no longer retained or valid.

***Medical and Physical Examinations*** - All applicants are required to be certified for medical and physical fitness for their positions. Some job categories require applicants to get a medical and physical examination after receiving a job offer. This ensures that employees meet the medical and physical requirements of the job. The offer of employment is contingent upon satisfactory completion of the certification.

An employee's medical information will be kept separate from other employee information and treated confidentially. Access to this information will be limited to those who have a legitimate need to know.

***Selective Service Compliance*** - Georgia law supports the selective service system by requiring that men present proof of registration (or prove that he is exempt from the requirement) to be eligible for state government jobs. This requirement applies to male applicants between the ages of 18 and 26.

Additionally, the law, which became effective July 1, 1998, required that male employees within the same age group and hired before the law went into effect must also present proof of registration or of being exempt. Any employee who cannot provide proof must be terminated.

***Sexual and Other Unlawful Harassment*** - Cobb/Douglas is committed to providing a work environment free of discrimination and unlawful harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments based on an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or any other legally protected characteristic will not be tolerated. Any employee who wants to report sexual or other unlawful harassment should do so promptly to his or her supervisor. If the supervisor is unavailable or the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person, the employee should immediately contact the personnel director or any other member of management. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal.

Sexual harassment (both overt and subtle) is a form of misconduct, undermines the integrity of the employment relationship, and is strictly prohibited. Anyone engaging in sexual or other unlawful harassment will be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

***Security*** -Cobb/Douglas is committed to providing a safe working environment for all of its employees. Therefore, all employees are requested to do everything reasonable and necessary to keep Cobb/Douglas a safe place to work.

Safe-guarding personal property, such as cash, handbags, or briefcases is the responsibility of employees while on premises or during business travel. Before leaving the workplace in the evening, employees should lock all files and cabinets and clear all confidential or work materials from desk surfaces. All firearms or weapons of any type, concealed or unconcealed, are prohibited on State premises. Only those employees whose jobs specifically require the carrying of firearms may do so.

***Access to Premises*** - To provide for the safety and security of employees and the facilities, only authorized visitors are allowed in the workplace. Restricting unauthorized visitors helps maintain safety standards, protects against theft, ensures security of equipment, protects confidential information, safeguards employee welfare, and avoids potential distractions and disturbances.

If an unauthorized individual is observed on the premises, you should immediately notify your supervisor. If necessary, direct the individual to the personnel office or notify security.

Additionally, employees are not permitted on Cobb/Douglas Community Service Boards premises before or after regular working hours without the express approval of the department manager. As a matter of personal safety, employees should avoid remaining alone in any facility after regular working hours.

***Solicitation*** - To avoid work disruptions and possible discord between employees, Cobb/Douglas prohibits employees from soliciting other employees or distributing literature in connection with non-work-related causes, commercial pursuits, groups, or interests. Additionally, persons not employed by Cobb/Douglas may not solicit or distribute literature in the workplace without authorization.

We recognize that employees may have interests in events and organizations outside the workplace. However, employees are prohibited from soliciting other employees or distributing literature during working time. Employees can use their meal and break periods for personal purposes, but must not engage in solicitation, literature distribution, or other activities that disrupt or interfere with ongoing operations or other employees' work time or enjoyment of their break or meal periods.

***Bulletin Boards*** - Bulletin boards are located throughout our facilities in areas that employees frequently visit in order to ensure that employees have constant access to posted information. Our bulletin boards are used to communicate important information on equal employment opportunity, wage and hour, health and safety, and other issues. They are also used to communicate information regarding our policies and its business and announcements, including, but not limited to, job postings, safety rules, health items, benefit programs, and notices announcing special events.

Unless specifically authorized, employees may not post, tape, tack, or affix any form of solicitation materials, photographs, or notices on our bulletin boards, or anywhere else on Cobb/Douglas premises.

***Workplace Violence Prevention*** - Cobb/Douglas is committed to preventing workplace violence and to maintaining a safe work environment.

All employees, including supervisors and temporary employees, should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from fighting, "horseplay," or other conduct that may be dangerous to others. Firearms, weapons, and other dangerous devices or substances are prohibited from State premises unless specifically authorized.

Conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee, a customer, or a member of the public will not be tolerated. This includes, for example, threats or acts of violence, aggressive behavior, offensive acts, threatening or offensive comments or remarks, and the like.

Any violence or threats of violence should be reported as soon as possible. We will investigate all reports of violence, including threats of violence. The identity of persons making a report will be protected as much as is practical. To maintain workplace safety and ensure a fair investigation, employees may be suspended pending investigation.

Employees found to be responsible for making threats of violence or for engaging in violent behavior will be subject to disciplinary action, including dismissal.

Employees are encouraged to bring their disputes or differences with other employees to the attention of their supervisors or the personnel director before the situation escalates. We are eager to assist in resolving employee disputes, and will not discipline employees for raising such concerns.

## Employee Acknowledgement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Cobb/Douglas Community Service Boards' Employee Handbook, which provides important information about my employment. I understand that Cobb/Douglas CSB can, at its sole discretion, modify, eliminate, revise, or deviate from the guidelines and information in this handbook as circumstances or situations warrant.

I also understand that any changes made by Cobb/Douglas CSB with respect to its policies, procedures, or programs can supersede, modify, or eliminate any of the information outlined in this handbook. I understand that the latest version of this handbook and all policies are accessible by me online at [www.cobbcsb.com](http://www.cobbcsb.com). I accept responsibility for familiarizing myself with the most current version of this handbook and all policies and any updates and I agree to follow all the rules and guidelines contained in this handbook and in agency policies. I will seek verification or clarification of any terms or guidance when necessary.

Furthermore, I acknowledge that this handbook and agency policies are neither contracts of employment or legal documents and nothing in the handbook or agency policies creates an express or implied contract of employment. I understand that I should consult my supervisor or the Cobb/Douglas Human Resources Director if I have any questions that are not answered in this handbook or agency policies.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee/Intern/Contractor/Volunteer Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date