



Blair Planning

Employee Handbook

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BLAIR PLANNING

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Employee Welcome

Welcome to Blair Planning. We are looking forward to working with you and hope you will enjoy your new position with us.

Our business is to help people and organizations with special needs, goals, or problems. We insist upon excellence in everything we do, and put our constituency first.

Blair Planning supports a friendly and professional working environment. Regardless of the position you hold, you have a significant responsibility in our operations. Through high employee contributions and recognition we believe the County residents can attain a standard of living that will provide the pride, the rewards, the opportunities, and the security that each of us seek.

This handbook has been prepared to help you understand our policies, procedures, and benefits and should answer many of the questions that come up during your employment.

Specific questions as to how these policies may apply to your individual situation should be directed to the Planning Director who will interpret the policies and procedures, which are approved by the Blair County Planning Commission.

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About this Handbook

This handbook is being supplied to all Blair Planning employees. Its purpose is to provide you with a clear and consistent guide to the general policies, the benefits offered to you, and to ensure the fair and consistent application of Blair Planning policies and procedures among all employees. It will familiarize you with our business and spell out the responsibilities and privileges of employment.

There are a variety of topics addressed in this handbook that have an effect on the way the Board does business and the way our work environment affects you. The policies, benefits, and expectations discussed in this handbook are based on the present business climate. It is important to note that although they are current, the policies and practices outlined in this handbook are subject to change, and may be changed at the discretion of the Board at any time.

This handbook was designed for the use of all employees; however, the handbook (in the event of a conflict) does not supersede any federal, state or local statute, rule, regulation, ordinance, applicable employment law, or the statutory and inherent powers of the court or other elected officials. In the event that a specific policy or procedure is nullified, all remaining policies or procedures shall not be affected. This handbook is written for all Blair Planning employees. The policies and responsibilities apply to everyone employed by Blair Planning.

This Handbook is not intended to be a contract or part of a contractual agreement between Blair Planning and you; at all times, your employment by Blair Planning is on an at-will basis. Blair Planning, as employer, reserves the right to modify, delete, or add to any of the policies, benefits, and all other material included in this handbook at any time; however, the Board members will strive to formulate and revise policy with the employee's concern as a high priority.

Part 1 - Hiring Procedures

Posting the Position

Job opportunities will be communicated to current employees internally by posting, memo, or email. We encourage employees who have the required skills necessary for these open positions to apply. Required skills and experience will be listed on the job posting to better assist current employees in assessing their qualifications. Occasionally, an employee's work experience will serve to qualify them in particular areas where outside candidates would be required to have professional training.

All opportunities will be advertised in appropriate publications for the benefit of others who would like to apply for a position here. At a minimum, job openings will be published in the Altoona Mirror, Morrisons Cove Herald, and the Tyrone Herald. Additionally, all planning positions will be emailed to the Pennsylvania Chapter, all fourteen schools in the State System of Higher Education, Temple University, PennState Altoona, and U-Pitt Johnstown. Additional distribution may occur at the Director's discretion.

Nepotism

We will always hire employees based on their experience, skills and merit. If an employee's family member is interested in an available position, application should be made through standard channels. Most open positions are posted internally before they are placed in employment publications. This 'advance notice' is the only advantage available to family or friends of employees who wish to apply. In no case will we allow immediate family members to be placed in a manner where one member supervises another.

Interviewing Job Candidates

All applicants must submit a cover letter and a resumé showing how the applicant's education and experience to date are a good match for the position. Letters of reference are not needed initially, but will be requested at the time an interview is offered. All job applications are kept on file for twelve months.

Upon receipt, all job applications will be assigned a sequential number and be reproduced with all personally-identifying information removed. A spreadsheet will be kept which matches the assigned number with the contact information of the candidate. This focuses the review of applications to the education, experience, and other pertinent facts regarding the match between the available position and the applicant. The original applications will be reinstated once interviews have been offered.

Interviews will cover the basic skill set of the applicant as well as an assessment of how well the applicant will blend into the existing team. Interview questions are at the discretion of the Director, who will be in charge of all interviews. Questions should seek to discover an applicant's ability to apply skills to real workplace settings, verify resumé information, and test the ability to think 'on your feet.'

Interviews will be conducted in the office whenever practical. Board members have the opportunity to participate, but the Director has charge of the interview. Additional staff may be called in, particularly where the new hire will be working with or replacing a particular staff person. In the event an in-office interview is not possible, video conferencing will be utilized for the interview in a manner determined appropriate by the Director.

Checking References

When accepting an interview, the applicant will be required to identify a minimum of three references that are not current supervisors, family, or current co-workers. The Director will contact these references to verify resumé information, gain a general assessment of work habits, and gain a baseline for the interview. Supervisors will be contacted through the job/experience listing on the resumé.

Employment Offers

The Director shall evaluate all interviewed candidates for the open position. Once a ranking is established, the Director shall make employment offers in the order of ranking until the position is filled. All employment offers are contingent on the applicant meeting employment eligibility requirements of Federal and State laws, as well as acknowledging the policies of Blair Planning.

Following an acceptance of an offer of employment, all new employees will be given a start date and an orientation session. During the orientation, the new employees will be given workplace rules, policies and other information about their positions. Authorization forms and policies must be signed at this time before actual work is performed.

Probationary Period

On the first day you report to work, you will begin a Probationary Period to last ninety calendar days. This Probationary Period will be a time for learning about your fellow employees, the Board, and the tasks involved in your job position. We expect you will also become familiar with other relevant information about Blair Planning and our rules or regulations.

We will work closely with you on all aspects of your training, understanding and responsibilities during this period. We encourage new employees to get to know their fellow co-workers board members quickly as this tends to help you succeed. By completing this probationary period, an employee is not guaranteed continued employment for any term as it is always "at-will" and subject to various conditions. Benefits will start at the end of the probationary period unless otherwise required by law.

the employee shall have twenty vacation days; and after the twentieth year, the employee shall have twenty-five vacation days.

Years of service shall be calculated from the employee's date of hire, and the number of days earned shall be made available in their entirety at the beginning of the fiscal year. In the event an employee's anniversary date occurs mid-year and such anniversary results in an increase of the number of vacation days available, the new vacation days shall be made available in their entirety on the anniversary date.

Paid vacation and personal time will be used in minimum increments of one-half day. To take vacation or personal days, employees must request advance approval from the Planning Director. Requests will be reviewed on a number of factors, including business needs and staffing requirements. The time off is paid at the employee's regular pay rate at the time it is taken.

In the event that available vacation is not used by the end of the benefit year, employees may carry unused time forward to the next benefit year. The total number of vacation days available to an employee shall never exceed twice the number that the employee can accrue in a single year, unless an exception is granted in writing by the Director for extenuating circumstances. Personal days do not carry over. Employees earning fifteen or more days of vacation a year are strongly encouraged to take at least one full week off (as a block of time) during the year.

When the employee separates their employment with Blair Planning, the employee will receive payment for any unused vacation days accrued to the date of termination, up to a total maximum of ten days. Under no circumstances will any employee be entitled to receive more than ten unused vacation days paid out upon termination.

Sick Time

Blair Planning provides paid sick leave to all regular employees for periods of temporary absence due to illness or injury. Sick time is considered a mutual benefit. Sick time is not tracked and is available to prevent the spread of sickness, encourage recovery, and support the employee. No sick time is paid out upon the termination of the employee's employment for any reason.

Paid sick leave can be used in increments of one hour. Full-time employees may use sick leave benefits for an absence due to their own illness or injury or that of a near family member. Employees who are unable to report to work due to illness or injury should notify the Director before 9:00 AM if possible. Absences extending beyond three days will require further explanation, and absences extending beyond ten will require communication from a medical practitioner.

For short-term disability (eight to ninety days), short-term disability benefits are available. The employee will be paid sick time in an amount proportional to the amount of the usual full salary not covered by the short-term disability benefits. The difference between short-term disability and sickness is defined by the short-term disability insurance policy. In the event of disability or sickness lasting ninety days or more, the employee will be converted onto the long-term disability benefits and/or workers' compensation.

Funeral and Bereavement Leave

Employees may take up to five days of paid bereavement leave to attend the funeral of a deceased parent, spouse, or child; or to administer the affairs of a deceased person when so designated by the

deceased or other authority. In these cases of administration or near family members, the employee may request the Director allow the use of other paid time off as may be necessary.

Employees may take up to three days of paid bereavement leave to attend the funeral of a deceased sibling, sibling-in-law, grandparent, grandparent-in-law, parent-in-law, uncle, aunt, or any member of the employee's household.

Jury Duty

Blair Planning encourages employees to fulfill their civic responsibilities by serving jury duty when required. Employees must show their jury duty summons to the Director as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to accommodate the absence. Of course, employees are expected to report for work whenever the court schedule permits. Either Blair Planning or the employee may request an excuse from jury duty if, in our judgment, the employee's absence would create serious operational difficulties.

All regular full-time employees will qualify for paid jury leave, with benefits as though they were in the office. Employees are required to reimburse Blair Planning all earnings received for jury duty.

Military Duty

A military leave of absence will be granted to employees, except those occupying temporary positions, to attend scheduled drills or training or if called to active duty with the U.S. Armed Services.

The leave will be unpaid. However, employees may use any available paid time off for the absence.

Subject to the terms, conditions and limitations of the applicable plans for which the employee is otherwise eligible, health insurance benefits will be provided by Blair Planning until the end of the month in which the leave begins. At that time, employees will become responsible for the full costs of these benefits if they wish coverage to continue. When the employee returns from military leave, benefits will again be provided by Blair Planning according to applicable plans.

Benefit accruals, such as vacation, sick leave, or holiday benefits, will be suspended during the leave and will resume upon the employee's return to active employment.

Employees in two-week active duty training assignments or inactive duty training drills are required to return to work for the first regularly scheduled day after the end of the training, allowing reasonable travel time. Employees on longer military leave must apply for reinstatement in accordance with all applicable state and federal laws.

Every reasonable effort will be made to return employees to their previous position or a comparable one. They will be treated as though they were continuously employed for purposes of determining benefits based on length of service, such as the rate of vacation accrual and job seniority rights.

Family & Medical (FMLA) Leave

Blair Planning provides family or medical leaves of absence without pay to full-time employees who are temporarily unable to work due to a serious health condition or disability. For purposes of this policy, serious health conditions or disabilities 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, childbirth, and related medical conditions.

To be eligible to take medical leave under this policy, a full-time employee must meet all of the following conditions:

- The employee must have worked for Blair Planning at least twelve months. The twelve month period will be measured from the date employment commenced (this includes the introductory period).
- The employee must have worked at least 1,250 hours during the twelve month period immediately before the date when the leave would begin.

Exceptions to the service requirement will be considered to accommodate employees when possible.

Eligible employees should make requests for medical leave to the Planning Director at least thirty days in advance of foreseeable events and as soon as possible for unforeseeable events. Requests must be made by completing the Family and Medical Leave Request form. A health care provider's statement must be submitted verifying the need for medical leave and its beginning and expected ending dates. Any changes in this information should be promptly reported to the Planning Director. Employees returning from medical leave may be required to submit a health care provider's verification of their fitness to return to work.

Eligible employees are normally granted leave for the period of the disability, up to a maximum of twelve weeks. Any combination of medical leave or family leave may not exceed this maximum limit. Employees will be required to use any accrued paid leave time for medical leave: once accrued paid leave time runs out, the leave will be uncompensated.

When leave is requested, the Planning Director will use the "rolling year" rule, which looks at the preceding twelve month period prior to the beginning date of the requested leave. Any Family or Medical Leave taken during that preceding twelve month period will be deducted from the employee's entitlement to future Family and Medical Leave.

Subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of its health care plan, Blair Planning will continue to provide health insurance benefits to regular full-time employees only for the full period of the approved medical leave. Benefit accruals, such as vacation, sick leave, or holiday benefits, will be suspended during the leave and will resume upon return to active employment. Every reasonable effort will be made to return employees to their previous position or a comparable one. They will be treated as though they were continuously employed for purposes of determining benefits based on length of service, such as the rate of vacation accrual and job seniority rights.

So that an employee's return to work can be properly scheduled, an employee on medical leave is requested to provide the Planning Director with at least two weeks' notice of the date the employee intends to return to work. If an employee fails to report to work promptly at the end of the approved leave period, Blair Planning will assume that the employee has resigned.

Personal Leave

Upon consideration and approval, Blair Planning provides leaves of absence without pay to full-time employees who wish to take time off from work duties to fulfill personal obligations. As soon as full-time employees become aware of the need for a personal leave of absence, they should request a leave from the Director.

Personal leave may be granted for a period of up to thirty calendar days. With the Director's approval, an employee may take any available vacation or sick leave as part of the approved period of leave. Requests for personal leave will be evaluated based on a number of factors, including anticipated work load requirements and staffing considerations during the proposed period of absence.

Benefit accruals, such as vacation, sick time, or holiday benefits, will be suspended during the leave and will resume upon return to active employment. When a personal leave ends, every reasonable effort will be made to return the employee to the same position, if it is available, or to a similar available position for which the employee is qualified. However, the BCPC cannot guarantee reinstatement in all cases. Employees will be treated as though they were continuously employed for purposes of determining benefits based on length of service, such as the rate of vacation accrual and job seniority rights. If an employee fails to report to work promptly at the expiration of the approved leave period, the BCPC will assume the employee has resigned.

Sabbatical / Work-Exchange

Blair Planning is open to sabbatical arrangements or similar work-exchange arrangements. Given the wide range of possibilities, these will be considered on an individual basis.

Emergency Closings

At times, emergencies may require the closing of a work facility. In the event that such an emergency occurs during non-working hours, local radio and/or television stations will be asked to broadcast notification of the closing. The BCPC will also notify its employees whenever possible via telephone.

When operations are officially closed due to emergency conditions, the time off from scheduled work will be paid. The Blair County Planning Commission has a strict 'family-first' position during emergency situations and expects employees to take care of family needs ahead of work place needs during those times. Should the need arise for manpower and the Director is asked to provide employees, such offers will be made to employees to accept strictly on a voluntary basis. Employees working during emergency shut-downs will be offered one additional personal day for each shut-down day worked.

The Director, in consultation with the Executive Committee, may make additional compensatory arrangements in the event of a large or prolonged emergency event. These arrangements will usually be coupled with alternative work arrangements.

Part 3 – Workplace Flexibility

Flexible Workday

Blair Planning, in accordance with its 'Family First' position, allows a flexible workday so long as the office is staffed during business hours. Employees may arrive between 6AM and 10AM and work through their work day to the appropriate time in the afternoon or evening.

Alternate Workweeks

To accommodate different lifestyles and employees who live somewhat distant, Blair Planning allows for an alternate workweek schedule, which must be approved by the Director. The two most common arrangements are to work four ten-hour days each week, or to work eighty hours across nine days in two weeks. This option is not for an occasional long weekend, but is intended as the employee's regular working schedule, once approved.

Telecommuting

Telecommuting is an option to employees who cannot make it in to work due to sickness, family care, weather, or other constraining event, but are able to work that day via computer. The telecommuting option is not to be confused with a work at home program where the majority of the employee's time is at home. The employee has the option of taking the workstation laptop home the night before, or can use equipment at home if such equipment has been set up with an appropriate connection into the Blair Planning server. No alternate connection should be used for access into the Blair Planning server or during the telecommuting session. In no event will the employee be compensated for use of personal equipment. The employee should be logged into Teams while working during the day.

The Director shall monitor the work assignments and telecommuting productivity. If it is found that the privilege is being abused, the Director may terminate the privilege for the abusive employee. Unless told otherwise, employees may assume the telecommuting option is available to them.

Alternate Holidays

In recognition of the diversity of the population of the nation, we allow employees to utilize alternate holidays to observe significant religious and/or cultural days throughout the year. The Director shall be notified in advance if an employee intends to observe an alternate holiday.

When an alternate holiday is observed, the employee chooses to swap an official holiday for the alternate. For example, a Buddhist may choose to observe Laba in mid-January in lieu of Martin Luther King Day. In that case, Laba would be the employee's paid holiday, and the employee would come in to work on the official holiday even if the office is closed. When working on a day when the office is closed, the employee shall email when starting and ending the day.

Alternate holidays are a one-day for one-day swap; an employee cannot, for example, swap out Christmas day for an entire week of Chanukah. If an entire week is desired, the employee must find other paid time off to cover the additional days.

The list of recognized holidays is below, and each represent one day (in the event of a longer period of celebration, the first or last day is recognized, depending on the origin). Others may be recognized by the Director with evidence of the significance of the day to the employee.

Day	Religion	Day	Religion
Laba	Buddhist	Tisha B'Av	Jewish
Ash Wednesday	Christian	Eid al-Adha	Islam
Orthodox Lent	Christian	Shuubun no Hi	Shinto
Shunbun no Hi	Shinto	Rosh Hashana	Jewish
Purim	Jewish	Cheung Yung	Buddhist
Maundy Thursday	Christian	Yom Kippur	Jewish
Qing Ming	Buddhist	Sukkot	Jewish
Passover	Jewish	Shemini Atzeret	Jewish
Kodomo no Hi	Shinto	All Saints' Day	Christian
Ascension Day	Christian	Chanukah	Jewish
Ramadan	Islam	Kwanzaa	African
Shavuot	Jewish	Patron Saint	Christian
Eid al-Fitr	Islam	Other	As Approved

Part 4 – Professional Conduct

Professional Development

Blair Planning includes monies in the annual budget for professional development opportunities. We expect staff to keep current in the state of the art of planning through continuing education opportunities, webinars, conferences, workshops, and meetings. Additionally planners are encouraged to seek certification with the American Institute of Certified Planners when they become eligible.

Standards of the Planning Profession

Blair Planning recognizes the Pennsylvania State Ethics Act, and also upholds the *Ethical Principles of Planning* published by the American Planning Association. Those employees who are certified through the American Institute of Certified Planners are also expected to uphold that organization's *Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct*. These three documents are included in our expectations of our employees by reference.

Public Meetings

Public meetings are a forum where a board meets to dispose of public business. Employees do not need to be at meetings if they are not presenting or participating (but are welcome if they choose to attend).

Public meetings are not a forum for airing personnel grievances, exposing internal office disputes, or otherwise presenting conflicts. These are to be handled in the office through established procedures. If the outcome of these procedures necessitates a vote of the Board, that specific item will be brought to the meeting for action.

Representing Blair Planning

When employees speak or take action on behalf of Blair Planning, they must do so with consideration of our generally accepted practices or upon approval of the Board or Director. Should an employee publicly take a position inconsistent with our policy or practice, we ask that the employee make clear (s)he does not speak as a Blair Planning representative.

Expected Employee Conduct

To ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment, Blair Planning expects employees to follow rules of conduct that will protect the interests and safety of all employees and the organization.

It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace. The following are examples of infractions of rules of conduct that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Should instances of unacceptable conduct not included in the following list arise, Blair Planning may likewise find it necessary and appropriate to initiate disciplinary action in accordance with these policies and procedures.

Attendance

- Improper or unauthorized use or abuse of paid leave.
- Excessive absenteeism which disrupts or diminishes operational effectiveness.
- Being absent without authorized leave
- Repeated unauthorized late arrival or early departure from work.

Behavior

- Willful or negligent violation of Blair Planning policies, procedures, or related directives.
- Insubordination.
- Engaging in a conflict of interest activity.
- Conduct that discredits the employee, other employees, or Blair Planning; or willful misrepresentation of Blair Planning.
- Conviction of a crime, the nature of which reflects the possibility of serious consequences related to the continued assignment or employment of the employee. This includes convictions based on a plea of *no contendere* or on a misdemeanor involving moral turpitude
- Knowing falsification, removal, or destruction of information related to employment, payroll, or work-related records or reports.
- Engaging in off-duty employment for any business under contract with Blair Planning.
- Discourteous treatment of the public or other employees, including harassing, coercing, threatening or intimidating others.
- Conduct that interferes with the management of Blair Planning operations.
- Violation or neglect of safety rules, or contributing to hazardous conditions.
- Unauthorized removal or use of any Blair Planning property.
- Physical altercations.
- Any act or conduct that is discriminatory in nature toward another person's race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, religious beliefs, or political affiliations.
- Inappropriate use of computer equipment.

Performance

- Inefficiency, incompetence, or negligence in the performance of duties, including failure to perform assigned duties or training, or failure to discharge duties in a prompt, competent, and reasonable manner.
- Refusal or inability to improve job performance in accordance to written or verbal direction after a reasonable time period.
- Refusal to accept reasonable and proper assignments.
- Intoxication or incapacity on duty due to the use of alcohol or drugs.
- Careless, negligent, or improper use of Blair Planning property, equipment or funds. This includes unauthorized removal, or use for private purpose, or use involving damage or unreasonable risk of damage to property.

Dress

The dress code for the office may be described as professionally casual. We expect clothes to be practical and not revealing. Some guidelines on what is inappropriate:

- Holey, sheer or transparent clothing
- Form-fitting clothing
- Clothing with printed messages (such as text, symbols, and pictures)
- Uncovered knees and shoulders
- Neckline exposure greater than the width of your hand with the fingers closed when the index finger is placed on the bone just below the neck
- Sandals, heels more than one inch, and flip-flops.

External Professional Support

Blair Planning has standing contracts for legal and financial services with outside firms. The employees at these firms are considered an extension of our office and have certain fiduciary responsibilities regarding their activities with Blair Planning. These firms work for the organization, not individual staff members. To better manage costs on both sides of these relationships, any contact with these firms must be made through established procedures or with prior review and consent of the Director.

Outside Employment

An employee may hold a job with another organization as long as he or she satisfactorily performs his or her job responsibilities with Blair Planning. All employees will be judged by the same performance standards regardless of any existing outside work requirements.

If the Director determines that an employee's outside work interferes with performance or the ability to meet the requirements of Blair Planning as they are modified from time to time, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside employment if he or she wishes to remain with Blair Planning.

Outside employment will present a conflict of interest if it has an adverse impact on Blair Planning or uses information gained through employment at Blair Planning for personal gain or advantage (including an advantage for the outside business).

Solicitations

In an effort to assure a productive and harmonious work environment, persons not employed by Blair Planning may not solicit or distribute literature in the workplace at any time, except as may be agreed to through program conditions or similar requirements.

The posting of written solicitations in Blair Planning facilities is prohibited. Bulletin boards are reserved for official organization communications on such items as internal memoranda, job openings, employer announcements, official legal notices, or regulatory notices. Because the nature of planning includes community support, sanctioned events may also be posted within Blair Planning facilities upon approval by the Director. Political petitioning and signing petitions are both prohibited.

Use of Communication Devices

Communication devices are provided for Blair Planning business. Excessive use of this equipment by employees for personal business ties up the service(s) and prevents the organization from giving the most efficient service. It is recognized, however, that some personal items are necessary and for this reason Blair Planning does not desire to prohibit the use of equipment for personal use. Such personal issues should be held to an absolute minimum. Under some circumstances, employees may be required to reimburse the organization for any charges resulting from such use.

To ensure effective telephone communications, employees should always use an appropriate greeting and speak in a courteous and professional manner. Please confirm information received from the caller, and hang up only after the caller has done so. If a caller becomes angry, belligerent, or argumentative beyond the ability to hold or comprehend a reasonable conversation, the employee is authorized to terminate the call politely, inviting the caller to call again once calmed down. Such incidents should be reported to the Planning Director immediately.

Part 5 - Compensation

Exempt Employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act

Employees are classified as either exempt or non-exempt from minimum wage and overtime requirements under Federal law. The specifics of which employees are exempt can be found in the US Department of Labor Fact Sheet 17-A. Exemption status is listed in each job description.

Overtime and compensation time

Non-exempt employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act are eligible for overtime for all hours worked in excess of forty in any work week. We will try to give as much notice as possible when overtime will be needed. All overtime designated by your manager is approved overtime. Overtime worked without prior approval will not be paid. Overtime is paid at the rate of one-and-one-half times (1½x) your regular hourly rate of pay. Paid time off is not included in calculating overtime.

Salary Review

Salaries are reviewed annually in conjunction with setting the budget for the next fiscal year. The Director is primarily responsible for determining an appropriate salary range or raise using the most recent salary survey published by the American Planning Association as guidance as tempered by budget constraints. The Director determines an appropriate salary and puts the findings into a recommendation to the full Board. The Board sets the salaries with a specific vote at a public meeting as required by the Sunshine Law.

Paydays

Paydays occur on alternate Fridays and cover a two week period that ends the Saturday before the payday. There are generally 26 paydays annually.

Payroll information

Pay periods run from Sunday to the Saturday two weeks later. Time sheets and expense reimbursement requests are due by noon on the Tuesday following the end of the pay period. All accounts payable received in the office by the time sheet submittal deadline are paid out on payday. Timesheets are to be completed in a manner that best reflects the employee's time in each category on the sheet. Zero amounts may be left blank. The employee and the Director must both sign the timesheet packet.

Payroll Deductions

New employees are required to complete an Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate (W-4). Employees must present their Social Security card and Form I-9 with the W-4. Required taxes, as determined by Form W-4, will be withheld from employee's paychecks each pay period. Additional amounts withheld will be determined by the benefits the employee chooses to engage, as noted in the discussion of benefits below. Other non-standard deductions will be handled on a case-by case basis in consultation with the appropriate professionals.

Direct Deposit

The employee will be asked to complete a direct deposit authorization upon hire. This may be to any savings or checking account of the employee's choosing. Direct deposit is authorized the Wednesday before payday and is paid the morning of payday. Employees desiring to change the account into which direct deposit is made may simply complete a new direct deposit authorization.

Use of Personal Property

Blair Planning will compensate for the use of personal vehicles at the rate established by the travel provisions of this handbook.

When employees are required to telecommute for reasons beyond their control, Blair Planning may compensate the cost of the internet connection for the proportion of the time used, up to 33% of the internet portion of the bill. Such use must be substantiated, and pre-approved by the Director.

This is the only compensation for use of personal property authorized in this handbook. Those employees who choose to telecommute using their own computer equipment or use cellular service for job-related duties do so at their own expense. Similar equipment is provided by the organization for such use.

In extenuating circumstances the Director, in consultation with the Executive Committee, may allow compensation for use of personal property for good cause shown. This should be considered a rare occurrence and not be expected.

Part 6 - Benefits

Eligibility and General Information

All full-time employees are eligible for the benefits listed below upon successful completion of the probationary period. Retirement, Social security, Medicare, unemployment, workers compensation, and medical insurance are all mandatory, and the remaining benefits are strongly recommended to round out the employee's compensation package. Blair Planning reserves the right to make changes to the benefit package to reflect budget constraints, changing societal expectations, and to meet legal requirements. If the employee wishes to be exempt from a benefit, due cause or authorization must be shown by the employee, recognized by Blair Planning, and accepted by the benefit provider. Exemptions can be denied or revoked if the nonparticipation of the employee results in the termination of the organization's ability to offer the benefit.

Retirement Plan

Blair Planning will contribute an amount equal to six percent of the employee's annual salary each year, through an established SEP program. The six percent is in addition to the employee's base salary. The employee may choose the investment vehicle the employer contribution is added to, but such vehicle must be eligible to receive such contributions under SEP regulations.

The health reimbursement account described below can be managed to provide health funding in retirement. This account is funded by the employer but is owned by the employee. The employee may elect to deposit additional funds into the health reimbursement account in anticipation of future needs.

Life Insurance

Term life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment insurance, both with \$25,000 benefit amounts, are provided to full-time employees who are eligible under the general plan terms. The policy includes accidental death and dismemberment coverage. Blair Planning covers the full cost of the premium. The policy is portable should the employee wish to continue the coverage upon separation from the organization. Please consult the Director for details on this policy.

Disability Insurance

Short-term and long-term disability insurance is provided pursuant to general policy terms. The short-term policy covers disability work absence after eight days, and the long-term policy covers work absence beginning after ninety days. This policy premium is covered entirely by Blair Planning.

Short-term disability is enhanced though paid sick time in coordination with the Director to ensure a full salary is received during the short-term policy period. The employee also has the option of purchasing a supplemental disability policy through the disability insurance provider.

Medical Insurance

Full-time employees are eligible for health benefits on the first day of the month following successful completion of the probation period.

The employee is enlisted for health insurance benefits in accordance with the standard group policy terms. The group medical insurance policy includes major medical, hospitalization, routine care, dental, and vision coverage. Employees should consult the separate materials provided directly by the health care insurance provider for details of the plan.

Premiums for the employee are shared between the employer and employee, with Blair Planning paying ninety percent, and the employee contributing the remaining ten percent. For family members, the premium will be paid fifty percent by the employer and fifty percent by the employee. The health insurance policy is coupled with a health savings account to offset the high premium.

Blair Planning pays an amount equivalent to the individual deductible into the account each year, pro-rated on a quarterly basis. The employee has the option to contribute an additional amount up to the allowable cap(s) through a payroll deduction. The health savings account belongs to the employee and all contributions remain available to the employee, even after leaving Blair Planning.

Employees must convert their medical insurance coverage to Medicare from the group policy when eligible to do so.

Health Savings Account

Full-time employees are eligible to enroll in the health savings account during open enrollment each year or after a qualifying life event. This is a tax-advantaged account created to cover the high deductible of the provided group health plan. Blair Planning will contribute the cost of the deductible to the plan each year and the employee is able to elect additional savings into the account, up to the annual maximum set for that year by the Internal Revenue Service. The health savings account is portable and can be taken with the employee upon leaving Blair Planning. If managed as part of a retirement portfolio, the health savings account can provide a basis for health care payments well into retirement age.

Supplemental Insurance

Supplemental insurance policies are available to employees through an agreement with a supplemental insurance provider. The policies usually available include dental, vision, cancer, accident indemnity, personal sickness indemnity, and critical care with recovery. The employee is responsible for the full cost of premiums, which are deducted from the paycheck. Because the details and availability of these policies change over time, contact the Director for more information.

Medicare

All employees will have the required amount for Medicare deducted from each paycheck. Blair Planning will match the contributed amount. Employees with an official exemption must provide written documentation of the exemption which will be reviewed and confirmed prior to Blair Planning recognizing it. All employees must make Medicare their primary insurance instead of the private group insurance as soon as they are eligible for Medicare.

Unemployment Coverage

All employees will have a small amount deducted from the paycheck each pay period to cover the state-mandated cost of unemployment coverage. Employees with an official exemption must provide written documentation of the exemption which will be reviewed and confirmed prior to Blair Planning recognizing it.

Workers Compensation

It is the policy of Blair Planning to take all necessary steps to provide a safe and healthful work environment for its employees. All health and safety policies are in compliance with Federal and State regulations. It is the obligation of each employee to observe these regulations and practice safety at all times.

If you are injured or become ill, you are required to report this fact promptly to your supervisor and complete all required forms. In addition, any incidents witnessed as a "near-miss" should also be reported. Near miss scenarios help to identify potential danger areas before a serious accident occurs or identify poor safety standards and practices.

Any employee who is injured and/or loses time from work because of a job related injury, will be compensated according to the Workers' Compensation act. No employee, after an absence-causing injury, will be allowed to return to work until he or she is released by a doctor.

All injuries no matter how small or currently insignificant should be reported to the Director. If an employee is injured, requires first aid or witnesses a near miss, they should contact their manager and ask for help in completing an incident report.

Workers Compensation insurance is provided through a third party, and the toll-free contact number is posted in the office. As the policy changes subtly over time, please consult the Director with any questions, claims, or concerns. Employees with an official exemption must provide written documentation of the exemption which will be reviewed and confirmed prior to Blair Planning recognizing it.

Confidentiality

The Director receives regular reports on the status of the various benefit packages offered by Blair Planning. These reports can contain personal information or information that with some deductive reasoning will identify a specific employee. This information is kept strictly confidential as these reports are issued to us as an accountability measure on the part of the benefit provider. Once the purpose of the report is fulfilled, the report is destroyed.

Part 7 - Financial Management

Budget

Blair Planning receives funding from several primary sources:

- Local Share Assessment from the various municipalities and the County
- Liquid fuels allocation from the County
- Funding to administer the Metropolitan Planning Organization from PennDOT
- Fees for the review of proposed developments
- Grant programs that Blair Planning administers

A budget is developed during the final quarter of the fiscal year for the following fiscal year. The general practice is to present it to the Board in May and have it adopted in June. The budget is considered a guiding document and should be adhered to as much as possible. If overruns in a category become apparent, adjustments should be made to not exceed total available income for the fiscal year.

Funding Opportunities

Blair Planning is an independent organization, and therefore must discover and develop its own funding sources. Staff members are encouraged to keep this in mind in executing their daily tasks and bring any potential funding opportunities that are in harmony with the mission and goal of Blair Planning to the attention of the Director and other staff. Expansion of personnel and services is encouraged.

Financial Procedures

A separate policy document developed jointly with the professional accounting firm handling Blair Planning finances covers financial procedures. Procedures generally covering payroll are outlined above. The Board will receive financial reports about mid-month for the month prior. Other reporting will be made in accordance with the financial policy document.

Liability Protection

Blair Planning has four elements of liability protection covering the firm, the board members, and the staff. General liability covers the organization from most forms of liability that may occur in the office or by our daily actions. Directors & Officers Insurance covers the board for decisions they make, Professional Liability Insurance covers the staff for their daily decisions, and bonding covers those handling money and making financial decisions.

Business Expenses

Blair Planning will reimburse employees monthly for expenses which are directly business related. These include travel expenses, office supplies, and mileage incurred while traveling on business. Employees must submit receipts for all expenses and should consult with their manager prior to business trips to confirm eligible expenses. Purchasing cards will be issued to each employee for use wherever credit cards are taken. These should be used wherever possible to cut down on the need for reimbursement. Purchases made with the cards must be entered on the employee's expense claim each pay period. Purchases using the cards must be pre-approved by the Director.

Part 8 – Travel and Entertainment

Business Within Blair County

1. Local attendance at organized meal-based functions is permitted so long as a statement is included that indicates the relationship the event has with official business or professional development.
2. With prior approval of the Planning Director, employees may incur expenses on behalf of visiting dignitaries and guests, including visitors' spouses, in the conduct of Blair Planning business:
 - a. Hotel rates are payable at the prevailing single-occupancy room rate
 - b. Local transportation cost may be payable with specific authorization
 - c. Meals are payable based on actual cost.
3. Local business events shall be based on actual cost and will require receipts for reimbursement to the employee.
4. No hired consultant or hired firm shall receive benefits under this section.
5. Employees shall conduct themselves in a manner that is proper and leaves a favorable impression of the region.
6. Employees are not permitted to consume alcohol at any time while engaging in Blair Planning business.

Out-of-Town Business

1. Travel to out-of-town events for Blair Planning business shall be in accordance with the following:
 - a. Automobiles shall be used for all Blair Planning business, within a 300 mile radius of Hollidaysburg, and all travel within Pennsylvania.
 - b. When multiple employees are traveling to the same destination, one vehicle shall be used.
 - c. Spouses are permitted to travel to overnight out-of-town assignments; however Blair Planning is not responsible for the spouse's portion of the costs.
 - d. For events closer than sixty road miles (one-way), no overnight stay is permitted.
 - e. For out-of-state events that are more than 300 miles from Altoona, rail or air travel is expected. Alternatives may be approved with cause.
 - f. Employees are not permitted to consume alcohol at any time while engaging in official business.
2. Travel expenses shall be paid as follows:
 - a. Transportation shall be arranged using all reasonably available options in accordance with the above provisions. Transportation is payable at actual cost.
 - b. Mileage for private vehicles is payable at the most recently published GSA mileage rate.
 - c. Lodging is payable at actual cost. When an event is held in a lodging place and the lodging place has made rooms available to attendees at a special rate, such lodging shall be used if available.
 - d. For overnight assignments, meals and incidental expenses shall be paid through a per diem allowance. Said allowance shall be in accordance with the most recently published federal rate established by the US General Services Administration for the area in which the assignment is located.
 - e. For single day assignments, meals and incidentals are limited to \$25.00.
 - f. Blair Planning may, at the discretion of the Director pay these expenses by 1) providing a purchasing card to the employee, 2) advance payment (in the case of lodging and transportation), or 3) provide reimbursement to the employee upon presentation of proofs of purchase.

Part 9 – Confronting Problems

Progressive Discipline

The purpose of this policy is to state the position of Blair Planning on administering equitable and consistent discipline for unsatisfactory conduct in the workplace. The best disciplinary measure is the one that does not have to be enforced and comes from good leadership and fair supervision at all employment levels.

Blair Planning's own best interest lies in ensuring fair treatment of all employees and in making certain that disciplinary actions are prompt, uniform, and impartial. The major purpose of any disciplinary action is to correct the problem, prevent recurrence, and prepare the employee for satisfactory service in the future.

By using progressive discipline, we hope that most employee problems can be corrected at an early stage, benefiting both the employee and Blair Planning. Disciplinary action may call for any of these steps, depending on the severity of the problem and the number of occurrences. There may be circumstances when one or more steps are bypassed:

1. verbal warning
2. written warning
3. suspension with pay
4. suspension without pay
5. termination of employment

Progressive discipline means that, with respect to most disciplinary problems, these steps will normally be followed: a first offense may call for a verbal warning; a next offense may be followed by a written warning; another offense may lead to a suspension; and still another offense may then lead to termination of employment.

Blair Planning recognizes that there are certain types of employee problems that are serious enough to justify either a suspension, or, in extreme situations, termination of employment, without going through the usual progressive disciplinary steps. Blair Planning reserves the right to immediately suspend and/or terminate employment if, in its discretion, circumstances warrant it.

Problem Resolution

Blair Planning is committed to providing the best possible working conditions for its employees. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion, or question receives a timely response from Blair Planning management.

Blair Planning strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all employees. All are expected to treat each other with mutual respect. Employees are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism.

In the event serious differences of opinion occur which impair the working relationship of staff members and threaten to interfere with the successful operations of Blair Planning, the following steps are recommended – but not required - to resolve such differences: (1) staff members who have differences are urged to confront the issues in a face-to-face discussion and attempt to resolve the differences amiably and quickly. In the event a solution is not reached, (2) a conference should be held between the individuals concerned and the Planning Director. In the event a satisfactory solution is not reached, (3) the matter should be reduced to writing and submitted to the Planning Director for a final decision. In the event the Planning Director is personally involved, the matter should be placed

in memorandum format, addressed to both the Planning Director and the Chairperson of the Blair County Planning Commission.

If employees disagree with established rules of conduct, policies, or practices, they can express their concern through the problem resolution procedure. No employee will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a complaint with Blair Planning in a reasonable manner, or for using the problem resolution procedure.

If a situation occurs when employees believe that a condition of employment or a decision affecting them is unjust or inequitable, they are encouraged to make use of the following steps. The employee may discontinue the procedure at any stage.

1. Employee presents problem to the Director after the incident occurs.
2. The Director responds to problem during discussion or after consulting with appropriate management, when necessary. Planning Director documents the discussion.
3. The employee presents the problem to the Chairperson if the problem remains unresolved.
4. The Chairperson counsels and advises the employee, assists in putting problem in writing, and discusses problem with the Director if necessary.
5. If the problem still remains unresolved, the employee may appeal to the full Executive Committee of the Blair County Planning Commission for review of the problem.
6. The employee presents the problem to the Executive Committee in writing.
7. The Executive Committee reviews and considers problem then informs employee of the decision and forwards copy to the Director for disposition. The Executive Committee has full authority to make any adjustment deemed appropriate to resolve the problem.

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

Discrimination or Harassment

We believe that all employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and it is our policy to provide a workplace that is free of all forms of harassment employees or outside parties conducting business with us. Harassment because of sex, race, national origin, handicap or any other reason will not be tolerated. All management employees are responsible for implementing and monitoring compliance with this policy. Harassment is considered a serious act of misconduct and may subject an individual to disciplinary action including termination.

Harassment includes physical, verbal, and non-verbal abuse, intimidation and threats. Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome or unsolicited verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a nature in which submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for making decisions effecting conditions of employment or has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an employee's job performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Examples of harassment include:

1. Physical harassment includes hitting, pushing, touching, scratching, biting or any other physical contact that has the effect of harming an employee.
2. Verbal harassment may take the form of intimidation, propositions, suggestive comments, or threats to commit acts such as those described in number one above. Verbal harassment includes derogatory or vulgar comments or jokes with reference to sex, race, ethnic heritage, national origin, physical appearance, handicap or religion.

3. Non-Verbal harassment includes the display or distribution of objects or written or graphic materials that are suggestive, offensive, or degrading. Staring and leering and suggestive gestures are also forms of non-verbal -harassment.
4. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or verbal, non-verbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
 - Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.
 - Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of employment.
 - Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for decisions with regard to employment, advancement, compensation, training, work assignments and the like.

In the event an employee believes he or she is being subjected to any form of harassment by an individual or group of individuals in the workplace it is generally recommended that as a first step the employee informs the harasser(s) that their behavior is unwanted, offensive and strictly forbidden under Blair Planning policy. Likewise, it should be noted that sexual harassment is a violation of both Federal and State anti-discrimination laws.

If the offensive behavior or condition continues or if the initial behavior is sufficiently offensive or threatening in the mind of the harassed employee, he or she should immediately bring the matter to the attention of the Director in writing.

Because of the seriousness, sensitivity and special requirements of dealing with sexual harassment, employees who believe that they have been subjected to sexual harassment are urged to report it in writing directly to the Director. In cases where the Director stands accused, the written reports should be made to the Executive Committee. All complaints will be investigated promptly and where investigation confirms that this policy has been violated, appropriate action will be taken in a timely fashion. Employees will be protected against retaliation and their complaints will be treated confidentially.

Any question regarding this policy should be directed to the Director.

Substance Abuse

While on Blair Planning premises and while conducting business-related activities off the premises, no employee may use, possess, distribute, sell, or be under the influence of tobacco, alcohol or illegal drugs. The legal use of prescribed drugs is permitted on the job only if it does not impair an employee's ability to perform the essential functions of the job effectively and in a safe manner that does not endanger other individuals in the workplace.

Employees with drug or alcohol problems that have not resulted in, and are not the immediate subject of, disciplinary action may request approval to take unpaid leave time off to participate in a rehabilitation or treatment program. Leave may be granted if the employee agrees to abstain from use of the problem substance.

Under the Drug-Free Workplace Act, all employees performing work under a government contract or grant must notify Blair Planning of a criminal conviction for drug-related activity occurring in the workplace. The report must be made within five days of the conviction.

Violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment, and/or required participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation or treatment program.

Employees with questions on this policy or issues related to drug or alcohol use in the workplace should raise their concerns with the Director without fear of reprisal or breach of confidentiality.

Part 10 – Ending the Employer-Employee Relationship

Employee Initiated Termination

If you decide to leave Blair Planning, you must give the Director at least two weeks' courtesy notice. Providing adequate notice will ensure the necessary paperwork for your departure is prepared. Failure to provide the required two-week notice shall result in forfeiture of all accrued vacation time that would otherwise be paid out. All equipment and keys that are owned by Blair Planning and in the employee's possession must be returned to the Planning Director, who will issue an acknowledgement that these items were indeed returned. An exit interview may be requested prior to the last day worked.

Employer Initiated Termination

Blair Planning will initiate a termination for poor performance, continued violation of policy, as a final step in progressive discipline, or for a lack of funding. Additionally, grounds for immediate dismissal include but are not limited to:

- Absence without leave or failure to report after authorized leave has expired or after such leave has been disapproved for a period of three days.
- Physical threats against another person while on duty.
- Physical acts of violence against another person while on duty, except in self-defense or when coming to the aid of another person being physically assaulted.
- Conduct unbecoming to an employee of Blair Planning during working hours, which may discredit the organization.
- Offensive conduct or language toward the public or community, supervisor or administrative personnel.
- Willful damage to Blair Planning property, supplies or equipment.
- Failure to control mental or physical faculties as a result of deliberate action on the part of the employee, such as drinking or substance abuse.

Part 11 – Job Descriptions

Planning Director

The Planning Director carries out the mission and obligations of Blair Planning as interpreted by the Board. The Director has charge of the daily administration and operation of the organization, and is the primary contact between Blair Planning and other organizations. The Planning Director reports directly to the Board, and is the liaison between the Board and the staff.

Unlike the other Blair Planning positions, no blanket provision is made for current employees based on aptitude. All applicants for Planning Director must meet the qualifications stated herein. For purposes of the US-FLSA this is an exempt position.

Primary Duties

- Develops organization-wide goals, objectives, policies and procedures
- Presents the 'public face' of Blair Planning
- Oversees the daily administration and operation of Blair Planning
- Coordinates with other planning agencies and municipalities
- Prepares the organization's operations and capital budgets

Other Duties

- Reports events and activities to elected and appointed officials
- Represents the organization on regional/local boards
- Implements the Comprehensive Plan and/or other planning projects
- Reviews all organizational reports and presentations
- Evaluates planning-related legislation and applicability to County and local projects
- Evaluates proposals to local governments
- Attends a substantial number of meetings
- Maintains professional currency through professional development activities and networking
- Performs other related duties as necessary.

Knowledge

- Theory, principles and techniques of the planning profession and development process
- Federal, state and local laws, ordinances and codes pertaining to a wide variety of planning topics
- Methods and techniques of research and analysis
- Principles of budgeting and finance
- Real estate terminology, laws, practices, principles, and regulations
- General understanding of the capabilities and functions of computer applications including basic office productivity software, modeling, database management, publishing/graphic design, and GIS

Skills

- Comfortable with all levels of staff, public and others
- Management skills and ability to manage day-to-day operations
- Communicate in American English both orally and in writing
- Interpersonal and public relations
- Able to take a broad viewpoint and weave disparate elements into a cohesive whole
- Understand and manage high-profile, sensitive or controversial political situations
- Strong problem-solving and negotiation skills

- Ability to exercise sound and independent judgment within general policy guidelines
- Effective utilization of standard office equipment such as telephone, computer, typewriter, and productivity software.

Education & Experience

- Master's degree in community planning, public administration or a related field or a similar bachelor's degree with exceptional experience.
- Ten or more years' experience with four years of experience must be in a supervisory capacity.
- AICP Certification is required.

Transportation Planner

The Transportation Planner is the primary staff person responsible for the activities of the Altoona Metropolitan Planning Organization, including the elements outlined in the Unified Planning Work Program. The Transportation Planner is responsible for the overall transportation planning program for the County, including the MPO, assistance to local municipalities, training, and general promotion of transportation planning.

Current employees may fill this position if sufficient aptitude is demonstrated prior to application, even if they do not meet the requirements described below, however it is preferable that these requirements be met.

Primary Duties

- Staff contact for the Altoona Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Development and implementation of the Unified Planning Work Program
- Primary Liaison between Blair Planning and PennDOT
- Development and coordination of transportation plans
- Work with municipalities on transportation-related projects

Other Duties

- Identify transportation components in other planning efforts throughout the County for effective coordination
- Promote planning to government officials and the general public
- Monitor financial state of the transportation program
- Assist in the development of the budget based on expected transportation program income
- Identify additional transportation funding sources that complement the existing program
- Attends a substantial number of meetings
- Maintains professional currency through professional development activities and networking
- Other duties as assigned

Knowledge

- Theory, principles and techniques of the planning profession and development process
- Federal and State programs and requirements relative to all modes of transportation
- Methods and techniques of research and analysis
- Principles of budgeting and finance
- Transportation terminology, laws, practices, principles, and regulations
- General understanding of the capabilities and functions of computer applications including basic office productivity software, modeling, database management, and GIS

Skills

- Management skills and ability to manage day-to-day operations
- Communicate in American English both orally and in writing
- Interpersonal and public relations skills
- Organizational skills
- Strong problem-solving skills
- Ability to exercise sound and independent judgment within general policy guidelines
- Effective utilization of standard office equipment such as telephone, computer, typewriter, and productivity software.

Education & Experience

- Master's degree in community or transportation planning, geography, or a closely related field or a similar bachelor's degree.
- Five to eight years' experience depending on education, qualifications, and demonstrated ability
- AICP Certification is preferred and is encouraged when employee becomes eligible
- AICP CTP Certification considered.

Community Planner

The Community Planner helps implement the Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans through advice and recommendations to the constituent municipalities. This position is responsible to review and develop recommendations on all development proposals submitted to localities as well as those actions by local governing bodies as are required by state law.

Current employees may fill this position if sufficient aptitude is demonstrated prior to application, even if they do not meet the requirements described below, however it is preferable that these requirements be met.

Primary Duties

- Review and make recommendations on:
 - development proposals made to the various municipalities
 - certain proposals by the various elected boards
 - permit and grant applications
- Work with municipal governments concerning ordinance and plan development
- Assist in implementing the various adopted plans in the County
- Undertake research and analysis for immediate-issue planning efforts
- Develop and maintain a hazard mitigation education program

Other Duties

- Assist in the various agricultural support programs throughout Blair County
- Assist communities with their responsibilities under the National Flood Insurance Program
- Support economic development activities
- Urban Redevelopment Act planning when needed
- Assist the Director, Transportation Planner, and Strategic Planner as needed
- Promote planning to government officials and the general public
- Engage the public in planning
- Attend a substantial number of meetings
- Maintain professional currency through professional development activities and networking
- Other duties as assigned

Knowledge

- Theory, principles and techniques of the planning profession and development process
- State and local requirements relative to regional and municipal planning
- Familiarity with county and local plans for incorporation into local development efforts
- Site design and subdivision layout
- Spatial relationships as applied to community design and character
- Planning terminology, laws, practices, principles, and regulations
- General understanding of the capabilities and functions of computer applications including basic office productivity software, database management, graphic design/publishing, and GIS

Skills

- Multi-tasking
- Communicate in American English both orally and in writing
- Interpersonal and public relations
- Able to apply a systematic approach with attention to detail
- Problem-solving with a balance that is fair to all affected parties
- Exercise sound and independent judgment within general policy guidelines
- Effective utilization of standard office equipment such as telephone, computer, typewriter, and productivity software.

Education & Experience

- Degree in community planning, geography, or a closely related field.
- No experience necessary for this position
- AICP Certification is encouraged when the employee becomes eligible

Regional Planner

The Regional Planner conducts the research necessary to develop and implement a long-range planning program for Blair County, and – when requested – any constituent municipalities. Included in the scope of duties of the Regional Planner are the development and promotion of the County Comprehensive Plan and related projects. Such long range planning shall take into consideration the programmatic planning requirements of any entitlement funding sources. The Regional Planner will also be given responsibility for other mid- to long-term planning projects as they may arise.

Current employees may fill this position if sufficient aptitude is demonstrated prior to application, even if they do not meet the requirements described below, however it is preferable that these requirements be met.

Primary Duties

- Development and coordination of the County Comprehensive Plan
- Research and Development on any issue of long-term or regional concern
- Coordination with other planning agencies to ensure synchronized planning efforts
- Preparation of plans and studies focused on a particular location or specific topic
- Planning support to the various municipalities of Blair County

Other Duties

- Monitor other community efforts throughout the County for effective coordination of planning

- Promote planning to government officials and the general public
- Engage the public in planning
- Identify additional planning funding sources that complement the existing program
- Assist in the development of the budget based on expected funding and other income
- Attend a substantial number of meetings at times
- Maintains professional currency through professional development activities and networking
- Other duties as assigned

Knowledge

- Theory, principles and techniques of the planning profession and development process
- Federal and State programs and requirements relative to regional and municipal planning
- Methods and techniques of research and analysis
- Spatial relationships as applied to community vitality and character
- Planning terminology, laws, practices, principles, and regulations
- General understanding of the capabilities and functions of computer applications including basic office productivity software, modeling, database management, graphic design/publishing, and GIS

Skills

- Multi-tasking
- Communicate in American English both orally and in writing
- Interpersonal and public relations
- Apply a systematic approach
- Strong problem-solving skills balancing all interest in the public interest
- Ability to exercise sound and independent judgment within general policy guidelines
- Effective utilization of standard office equipment such as telephone, computer, typewriter, and productivity software.

Education & Experience

- Bachelor's degree in community planning, geography, or a related field.
- Two to five years' experience, depending on education, qualifications, and demonstrated ability
- AICP Certification is preferred and is encouraged when employee becomes eligible

Strategic Planner

The Strategic Planner identifies projects and funding necessary to implement the long-range planning program for Blair County, and its constituent municipalities. The scope of duties of the Strategic Planner includes assistance to local units of government, public and private non-profit groups, and associated publicly supported entities in their planning & development efforts which directly implement the goals and objectives outlined in the County's Comprehensive plan, including development of projects, identification of both public and private funding sources, assistance in preparing applications for such funding sources and tracking projects to completion.

Current employees may fill this position if sufficient aptitude is demonstrated prior to application, even if they do not meet the requirements described below, however it is preferable that these requirements be met.

Primary Duties

- Identify opportunities to implement the projects of the Planning Program

- Assist local units of government, public & private non-profits and associated publicly supported entities in development of grant proposals related to community planning.
- Monitor availability of relevant grant programs and manages on-going funded projects.
- Research and identify new government and private funding proposals.
- Maintain and implement funding calendar activities, including cultivation activities.

Other Duties

- Monitor community efforts throughout the County for effective coordination of planning
- Provide educational, technical and planning assistance.
- Assist local units of government resolve problems in a timely manner using creative solutions and by setting attainable goals.
- Serve as a liaison to funding agencies or organizations.
- Identify additional planning funding sources that complement the existing program
- Prepare and maintain progress reports on planning activities within the County
- Attend a substantial number of meetings at times
- Maintain professional currency via professional development activities and networking
- Other duties as assigned

Knowledge

- Theory, principles and techniques of the planning profession and development process
- Federal and State programs and requirements relative to public sector planning
- Grant writing, administration, monitoring, and reporting
- Mathematics and bookkeeping
- Planning terminology, laws, practices, principles, and regulations
- General understanding of the capabilities and functions of computer applications including basic office productivity software, modeling, database management, graphic design/publishing, and GIS

Skills

- Multi-tasking
- Communicate in American English both orally and in writing
- Interpersonal and public relations
- Apply a systematic approach
- Strong problem-solving skills balancing all interest in the public interest
- Ability to exercise sound and independent judgment within general policy guidelines
- Effective utilization of standard office equipment such as telephone, computer, typewriter, and productivity software.

Education & Experience

- Bachelor's degree in planning, geography, public administration, or a related field.
- Five years' experience, depending on education, qualifications, and demonstrated ability
- AICP Certification is preferred and is encouraged when employee becomes eligible

Planning Aide

The Planning Aide provides support to the entire staff, including communications, filing, reception, and Board reminders. The Planning Aide coordinates purchases, ensures procurement requirements are met, and takes in receivables arriving in person or by mail. This position is responsible for the maintenance of the library, archives, and both the electronic and physical file system.

Current employees may fill this position if sufficient aptitude is demonstrated prior to application, even if they do not meet the requirements described below, however it is preferable that these requirements be met.

Primary Duties

- Clerical support for staff including copying, filing, reception, and distribution of mail
- Procurement of office supplies and equipment
- Maintenance of public information in the library and on-line
- Scheduling and support of Board and Committee meetings
- Processing accounts receivable

Other Duties

- Monitor contracts and licenses for professional services, equipment, and computers
- Assist in collation of plans, policy documents, and other major documents
- Promote planning to government officials and the general public
- Attend meetings
- Maintain professional currency through professional development activities and networking
- Other duties as assigned

Knowledge

- English syntax, vocabulary, and grammar
- Familiarity with the Blair County community
- Moderate level knowledge of word processing and spreadsheet software
- Simple web site maintenance (posting and removal of notices and basic content)
- Basic financial management and/or bookkeeping
- Terminology, principles, and concepts relative to planning and government
- General understanding of the capabilities and functions of other computer applications

Skills

- Multi-tasking
- Communicate in American English both orally and in writing
- Typing/keyboarding
- Establishing and maintaining structure and organization in documents and files
- Recording, transcribing and presenting meeting minutes
- Exercise sound and independent judgment within general policy guidelines
- Effective utilization of standard office equipment such as telephone, computer, typewriter, and productivity software.

Education & Experience

- Diploma or GED.
- Five years clerical experience is needed for this position.
- Certified Administrative Professional status (or equivalent) is preferred, but not required

Planning Intern

The internship level in the planning profession often represents the first practical contact a prospective planner makes with the profession. Successful internships yield valuable insight and practical knowledge for students as they refine their educational and career paths. Many internships are unpaid, yet they offer a wealth of opportunities for students, such as college credit or the possibility for permanent employment with the organization upon graduation.

Interns usually are more marketable as they search for permanent employment because of their additional experience in the planning profession.

Internships carry a stipend when budgeting allows. The amount and form of the stipend varies based on budget constraints and contract availability, and will be set at the start of each internship. There are no fringe benefits available, since the internship period is shorter than The Planning Intern will have responsibilities as assigned by staff with the approval of the Director in consultation with the sponsoring educational program. As a result of this consultation, Blair Planning *may* alter the expectations for the intern to allow for a particular experience emphasizing the intern's aptitude and abilities, or allowing for a specific focus or research project to be done utilizing Blair Planning and its resources as a basis or catalyst.

Primary Duties

Generally, Blair Planning seeks interns to perform the following tasks, which comprise the primary responsibilities of the intern:

- Conduct subdivision and land development reviews
- Conduct Intergovernmental Reviews regarding conformity with county planning efforts.
- Present the major development applications to the planning commission.
- Assist in the preparation of reports, studies, and documents
- Interact with planning staff on a collaborative basis
- Present a positive image of both the sponsoring program and Blair Planning
- Write a final synthesis report on the experience to the sponsoring program and Blair Planning

Potential Duties

- Review of municipal ordinances and plans
- Maintenance of the Blair Planning online presence
- Development of the County Comprehensive Plan
- Hazard mitigation planning and plan implementation
- Emergency preparedness education
- Transportation planning; primarily data collection and/or analysis
- Stormwater and watershed planning
- Urban Redevelopment Law designations
- Active living programs and healthy lifestyle promotion
- Alternative energy programming
- Direct planning assistance to one or more municipalities
- Other active planning efforts undertaken by Blair Planning

Knowledge

- Basic understanding of planning principles
- Specific knowledge relating to pertinent specialty, particularly for graduate interns
- Competency in various computer software programs, such as Microsoft Office, Internet applications, database management, modeling, and GIS.

Skills

- Strong written and oral communication skills
- Strong research and analytical skills
- Motivated self-starter able to work both independently and as a team member
- Ability to work effectively in a team environment
- Flexibility and desire to work on varying planning projects

- Ability to effectively utilize standard office equipment such as telephone, computer, typewriter, and productivity software (i.e. word processing, presentations, spreadsheets, email)

Education & Experience

- Interest in the planning profession and relevant planning specializations.
- Nearing the end of their formal education experience in planning
- Letter of recommendation from their advising professor or department chairperson.

Date: _____

William R. Hall, Chairperson

Date: _____

David W. McFarland, Director