



UNIFIED PERSONNEL BOARD AGENDA

Date: April 16, 2026

Time: 6:30 p.m.

Location: BCC Assembly Room, Fifth Floor, Pinellas County Courthouse
315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida

Citizens to be Heard*

Employees' Advisory Council (EAC) Representative

I. Consent Agenda

1. Request Approval of the Minutes of the Regular Personnel Board Meeting held March 5, 2026

II. New Business

1. Revisions to Unified Personnel Board Policy 15: Drug-Free Workplace Program
2. Revisions to Unified Personnel Board Policy 11: Grievance Process
3. Revisions to Personnel Rule 7: Employee Grievances
4. End Market Driven Skill Supplement

III. Informational Items

1. Human Resources Promotional Appointment to Exempt Role
2. Human Resources Employee Voice Survey Action Plan Update
3. HR Update
4. Action Taken Under Authority Delegated by the Personnel Board

* Persons with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations to effectively participate in this meeting are asked to contact Pinellas County's Office of Human Rights by emailing requests to accommodations@pinellas.gov at least three (3) business days in advance of the need for reasonable accommodation. You may also call (727) 464-4880. View more information about the [Americans with Disabilities Act and requests for reasonable accommodation](#).

Persons are advised that, if they decide to appeal any decision made at this meeting/hearing, they will need a verbatim record of the proceedings, and, for such purposes, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is based.

Unified Personnel Board
Pinellas County
March 5, 2026 Meeting Minutes

The Unified Personnel Board (UPB) met in regular session at 2:00 PM on this date in the County Commission Assembly Room at the Pinellas County Courthouse, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

Present

Ricardo Davis, Chair
Kenneth Peluso, Vice-Chair
Jeffery Kronschnabl
William Schulz II
Mark Strickland

Not Present

Craig Bostock

Others Present

Wade Childress, Chief Human Resources Officer
Lisa McMurray, Employees' Advisory Council Representative
Jennifer Monroe Moore, Ogletree, Deakins, et. al., P.C., Board Counsel
Jessica Oakes, Board Reporter, Deputy Clerk
Other interested individuals

All documents provided to the Clerk's Office have been filed and made a part of the record.

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Davis called the meeting to order at 2:00 PM and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

No one responded to the Chair's call for citizens to be heard.

EMPLOYEES' ADVISORY COUNCIL (EAC) REPRESENTATIVE

Ms. McMurray indicated that she is continuing to search for an individual to serve as the UPB's second EAC appointee; whereupon, she provided brief comments regarding information she submitted for the Chief Human Resources Officer Performance Appraisal.

CONSENT AGENDA

Minutes of the Regular Personnel Board Meeting Held February 5, 2026

Chair Davis indicated that the next item on the agenda is a request for approval of the minutes for the regular Personnel Board meeting held on February 5, 2026: whereupon, Mr. Peluso made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Schulz and carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

Chief Human Resources Officer Performance Appraisal

Chair Davis introduced the item and noted that information related to the item was distributed to the members; whereupon, Mr. Strickland indicated that he believes that Mr. Childress provided good insight and responses to the scoring. Mr. Peluso also provided supportive comments regarding Mr. Childress' performance.

Upon the Chair's call for a motion to approve the evaluation as presented, Mr. Peluso made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Strickland and carried unanimously.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Appointment of the Following Personnel Board Member for 2025-2026:

CRAIG BOSTOCK BY THE CONSTITUTIONAL OFFICIALS

Mr. Childress reported that while Mr. Bostock was unable to attend today's meeting, he has been appointed to the Board and will be replacing Peggy O'Shea as the second constitutional appointee.

Office of Human Rights

Chair Davis indicated that he requested that Office of Human Rights (OHR) Director Betina Baron provide an update regarding discussions surrounding the OHR; whereupon, Ms. Baron indicated that, over the summer, a recommendation was made to eliminate the OHR; and that, since then, OHR staff have held one-on-one meetings with Commissioners to explain the value of the services provided and the potential impacts to the community if those services were no longer available. She related that, as requested by the County Administrator, an analysis is also being conducted with regard to the OHR's services and the potential impacts associated with discontinuing those services.

Responding to a query by Mr. Peluso, Ms. Baron indicated that the analysis of the OHR's services is being performed by an outside consultant.

Later in the meeting, Chair Davis indicated that that he believes the Board would be a strong voice if the members ever desired to take a position regarding the recommendation to eliminate the office; and that while the Board has no direct authority over the OHR, the UPB does not need to remain silent regarding the matter.

HR Update

Mr. Childress indicated that he would be happy to answer any questions related to the *HR Update*; whereupon, he provided an update regarding recent steps taken following receipt of the Employee Voice Survey results, including details related to the development and planned implementation of potential action plans within the HR Department.

Action Taken Under Authority Delegated by the Personnel Board

No one responded to Chair Davis' call for questions regarding the item.

The meeting was recessed at 2:11 PM and reconvened at 2:17 PM.

LISA CARTER V. PINELLAS COUNTY SOLID WASTE DEPARTMENT

Grievance Appeal: Motion for Reconsideration (Appeal No. 25-3)

Chair Davis indicated that the Board will now address the motion for reconsideration of a grievance appeal, which the Board voted on at the last UPB meeting; whereupon, statements were provided by Karmika Rubin, representing the Appellant, and Senior Assistant County Attorney Kelly Vicari, representing the Solid Waste Department.

Mr. Peluso made a motion not to accept the reconsideration or reverse the Board's action. In response to a query by Chair Davis, Mr. Peluso confirmed that his motion is to deny the motion for reconsideration; whereupon, his motion was seconded by Mr. Strickland.

Responding to queries by Mr. Schulz, Ms. Rubin explained that, if the motion for reconsideration is granted, the Appellant would be able to dispute the ruling made by a previous committee, which she has not been able to do prior to today; and that, if the motion for reconsideration is not granted, the Appellant would seek, through a motion in limine, to limit the County's evidence to matters related to the basis for the termination.

Thereupon, the motion to deny carried by a vote of 4 to 1, with Mr. Schulz dissenting.

Termination Appeal Hearing (Appeal No. 25-4)

In response to queries by Ms. Rubin and Mr. Schulz, Attorney Moore provided information regarding today's appeal proceedings and the documents distributed to the members; whereupon, responding to a query by Attorney Moore, Ms. Rubin indicated that the Appellant has filed one motion in limine and one motion to strike; and that she will begin by arguing the former.

Ms. Rubin explained that the motion in limine was filed in order to ensure that the scope of the termination appeal is limited to items which refer to the Appellant's termination; whereupon, she cited language within Personnel Rule 6: Discipline which relates to dismissals, pre-disciplinary hearings, and written notices of intent to administer discipline. Ms. Rubin also referenced a Pre-Disciplinary Hearing Notice given to the Appellant on October 21, 2025, and related that the request is to limit the scope of the termination appeal and exhibits to the specific issues and time period identified in the notice; whereupon, responding to a query by Mr. Strickland, Ms. Rubin confirmed that the time period in question is July 1 through September 30, 2025.

In rebuttal, Attorney Vicari referenced the Appellate Procedure Rules and explained that the personnel file held by Human Resources is a standard exhibit in appeals of termination and grievance; and that the Appellant did not file any exceptions to the exhibits during the pre-hearing conference. She also related that while relitigating a final written warning is not the purpose of today's proceedings, it remains relevant as part of the progressive discipline process.

Following brief comments by Chair Davis and Mr. Schulz, Mr. Peluso made a motion to deny the motion in limine and indicated that he believes it would be wrong to limit the scope of the termination appeal to a three-month period when the Board has already reviewed all submitted documentation; whereupon, Mr. Peluso's motion was seconded by Mr. Strickland.

Chair Davis indicated that he is reluctant to consider information outside of the period during which the determination to terminate the Appellant was made; and that he would like to believe that the termination decision is fully supported on its own merit, without the need to consider everything in the Appellant's past; whereupon, Mr. Peluso's motion carried by a vote of 4 to 1, with Chair Davis dissenting.

Attorney Moore noted that the next motion is the Appellant's motion to strike; whereupon, Ms. Rubin explained that the Appointing Authority has disclosed certain witnesses which the Appellant believes lack direct involvement in the investigation or termination decision associated with the appeal; and that permitting testimony from individuals without

meaningful decision-making authority would unnecessarily expand the scope of the hearing and produce collateral matters, which would prejudice the Appellant; whereupon, she related that the Appellant is requesting to strike or limit testimony from four witnesses; and that the Appellant would also ask that the four witnesses be sequestered.

Responding to a query by Mr. Strickland, Attorney Moore stated that, since this is a public meeting, witnesses are not sequestered; whereupon, in rebuttal, Attorney Vicari referenced the four witnesses which the Appellant has requested to strike or limit and indicated that one of the witnesses is not present. She also related that another of the witnesses was involved in the creation of the Appellant's Performance Improvement Plan; and that the other two witnesses worked directly with the Appellant and are mentioned in her Quarter 4 review, which is the document upon which the disciplinary action, pre-disciplinary hearing, and subsequent termination are based.

Mr. Peluso made a motion to deny the motion to strike, which died for lack of a second; whereupon, Mr. Strickland made a motion to retain the list of witnesses, as listed in the appeal packet. In response to a query by Attorney Moore, Mr. Strickland confirmed that his motion is to deny the motion to strike witnesses. The motion was then seconded by Mr. Peluso and carried unanimously.

Attorney Moore indicated that the final matter is the Appellee's exception to the pre-hearing conference statement; whereupon, Attorney Vicari explained that the Appellant has requested relief in the form of awarding backpay, benefits, and seniority and removing the termination from her personnel file; that, under the Personnel Rules, the only action that the Board will take is to determine whether the termination will be upheld or if there will be a remand for the department to make a recommendation for alternative disciplinary action; and that removing the termination from the Appellant's personnel file would violate Chapter 119 of Florida's public records laws; whereupon, she related that the Appellee filed the exception and desired to bring this to the Board's attention since the requested relief is not achievable as a result of this hearing.

In rebuttal, Ms. Rubin noted that this topic was discussed at the pre-hearing conference; whereupon, Attorney Moore provided additional details regarding the discussion held at the pre-hearing conference, including that the Appellant was informed that the requested relief was outside the scope of the Board's authority; that the requested relief was retained in the pre-hearing conference statement at the Appellant's request; and that it was understood by all counsel that the Board would not make determinations regarding the requested relief since it is outside the scope of the UPB's authority. She further indicated that the Appellee's exception to the pre-hearing conference statement appears to be unopposed and could be acknowledged as stipulated by the parties without the need for a formal ruling; whereupon, Ms. Rubin confirmed her agreement.

Thereupon, the appeal of termination filed by Ms. Carter, formerly of the Pinellas County Solid Waste Department, was presented by Ms. Rubin, representing the Appellant, and by Attorney Vicari, representing the Appointing Authority.

Attorney Moore requested that those planning to testify be sworn in by Ms. Oakes; whereupon, following opening statements, Attorney Moore read the following stipulated facts:

1. Appellant began her employment with Pinellas County on August 4, 1997.
2. Appellant received the disciplinary notice dismissal on November 7, 2025.

Thereupon, testimony, cross-examination, and questioning of the parties and witnesses began.

*The meeting was recessed at 4:17, 5:34, and 7:11 PM
and reconvened at 4:27, 5:42, and 7:31 PM, respectively.*

During cross-examination, Ms. Rubin objected to a query asked of the Appellant by Attorney Vicari; whereupon, Attorney Moore explained that it is within the Board's discretion whether to entertain this line of questioning, which relates to motivation for retaliation, as referenced in the Appellant's testimony. Following brief discussion, with input by Attorney Moore, Mr. Peluso made a motion not to pursue this line of questioning. The motion was seconded by Mr. Kronschnabl and carried by a vote of 4 to 1, with Mr. Schulz dissenting.

Attorney Moore queried as to whether the Board would like to entertain closing arguments or proceed directly to deliberations; whereupon, Mr. Peluso made a motion to proceed directly to deliberations, which was seconded by Mr. Schulz and carried unanimously.

Thereupon, Chair Davis indicated that the Board shall decide the following issues:

1. Does the Board find that the Appellant committed the activities for which she was terminated?

Mr. Peluso made a motion that the Board find that the Appellant did commit the activities for which she was terminated. The motion was seconded by Mr. Strickland and carried by a vote of 3 to 2, with Chair Davis and Mr. Schulz dissenting.

2. Does the Board find that cause existed for the disciplinary action in that the above-mentioned activities violated the Personnel Rules cited by the Appointing Authority?

Chair Davis noted that the Personnel Rules cited by the Appointing Authority are Personnel Rule 6: Discipline, Paragraph B, Infractions D1: Substandard quality or quantity of work and D3: Failure to perform assigned duties.

In response to Chair Davis' reference of the Personnel Rules cited by the Appointing Authority, Mr. Peluso made a motion with the same reasoning as D1: Substandard quality or quantity of work; whereupon, in response to a request by Attorney Moore to clarify the motion, he indicated that his motion is that the Board find that cause existed for the disciplinary action in that the above-mentioned activities violated the Personnel Rules cited by the Appointing Authority. The motion was seconded by Mr. Strickland and carried by a vote of 3 to 2, with Chair Davis and Mr. Schulz dissenting.


3. Does the Board find that the disciplinary action taken by the Appointing Authority toward the Appellant was appropriate?

Mr. Peluso made a motion that the Board find the disciplinary action taken by the Appointing Authority toward the Appellant was appropriate. The motion was seconded by Mr. Strickland and carried by a vote of 3 to 2, with Chair Davis and Mr. Schulz dissenting.

Attorney Moore restated the Board's decision regarding the appropriateness of the Appointing Authority's disciplinary action toward the Appellant; whereupon, she noted that, if one of the parties desires to file a motion for reconsideration, it should be filed within the timeframe provided for in the rule from the announcement of the findings today.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:36 PM.

TO: The Honorable Chair and Members of the Unified Personnel Board
FROM: Wade Childress, Chief Human Resources Officer 
DATE: April 16, 2026
SUBJECT: Revisions to Unified Personnel Board Policy 15: Drug-Free Workplace Program

Recommendation:

I recommend the changes to Unified Personnel Board Policy 15: Drug-Free Workplace Program described below and found in the attached document. The Appointing Authorities and Employees' Advisory Council concur with these recommendations.

Background:

The Unified Personnel Board Policy 15: Drug-Free Workplace Program has been updated to include random drug testing of employees in a mandatory testing or special-risk position. This applies to Commercial Driver's License (CDL), as well as the newly implemented changes for all Regional 911 positions and the Contract Administrative Coordinators in EMS/Fire Administration.

Please see changes below as well as highlighted in the attached copy of the Personnel Rule.

Section V. Testing B., to add the text shown in red underline below:

B. Random Testing of Employees in Mandatory-Testing or Special-Risk Positions

1. An Appointing Authority may require an employee in a mandatory-testing or special-risk position to submit to a random drug test if: (1) the employee is selected for testing using a random and unbiased selection procedure, and (2) all employees occupying the mandatory-testing or special-risk position within the Appointing Authority have an equal chance to be selected for testing. The random selection procedure and the frequency of testing will be established by the Chief Human Resources Officer, in consultation with the Appointing Authority. Employees selected for random testing will be notified when they are on-duty and must proceed to the testing site as soon as directed by the department.

Attachment:

- Unified Personnel Board Policy 15: Drug-Free Workplace Program redline version



EMPLOYEE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

UNIFIED PERSONNEL BOARD POLICY #15 **Drug-Free Workplace Program**

I. Purpose

As a part of its commitment to safeguard the health of its employees, to provide a safe place for its employees to work, and to promote a drug-free working environment, the Pinellas County Unified Personnel System (“the County”) has established this Drug-Free Workplace Program relating to the abuse of drugs, including alcohol and controlled substances, by its employees. Drug abuse, while at work or otherwise, seriously endangers the safety of employees, as well as the general public, and creates a variety of workplace problems including increased injuries on the job, increased absenteeism, increased health care and benefit costs, increased theft, decreased morale, decreased productivity, and a decline in the quality of products and services provided. This program is established in part to detect and remove abusers of drugs from the workplace, to prevent the use and/or presence of these substances in the workplace, and to assist employees in overcoming any dependence on drugs in accordance with the following guidelines.

This program is intended to conform to the requirements of the Florida’s Workers’ Compensation Law, Fla. Stat. § 440.101-.102, and rules promulgated pursuant thereto, hereinafter “FWCL”, and the Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, 41 U.S.C. § 8101-8106. The FWCL provides in part that an employee who is injured in the course and scope of employment and tests positive on a drug test may be terminated and may forfeit eligibility for medical and indemnity benefits under the FWCL. It is a condition of employment for an employee to refrain from reporting to work or working with the presence of drugs in their possession or system. Refusal to take a drug test will result in the employee forfeiting eligibility for medical and indemnity benefits under the FWCL and the employee being subject to dismissal or other discipline. The County group medical plan excludes benefits for job related injuries. Therefore, if Workers’ Compensation benefits are forfeited pursuant to this Drug-Free Workplace Program, the employee injured on the job will be without any County provided medical benefits.

The Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act requires recipients of federal grants to provide a drug-free workplace by: publishing a policy statement notifying employees that unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited in the workplace, providing this policy statement to each employee engaged in the performance of such grant, notifying employees engaged in the performance of such grant of the condition of employment to abide by the terms of the policy and notify their employer within 5 calendar days of a conviction for a criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace, notifying the granting agency within

10 calendar days after receiving notice from a convicted employee, and imposing sanctions on the convicted employee.

To the extent that the FWCL or the implementing rules are amended, or other statutes and rules requiring drug testing are determined to be applicable to the County employees, the County's program will be amended to the extent required by such, without the necessity of further general notice.

The County's Drug-Free Workplace Program has been prepared so as not to conflict with public policy and, further, not to be discriminatory or abusive. A drug-free workplace should be the goal of every employee and employer in America. Drug testing is only one of the several steps that must be taken to achieve this objective. When incorporated into a comprehensive antidrug effort, testing can go a long way in combating drug abuse in the workplace.

A copy of the County's Drug-Free Workplace Program will also be posted in appropriate and conspicuous locations on the County's premises and copies of the program will be made available for inspection during regular business hours at the County.

II. Scope

All County employees are covered by the County's Drug-Free Workplace Program and, as a condition of employment, are required to abide by the terms of this program. Any employee in doubt as to the requirements or procedures applicable to their situation may contact Human Resources for information.

III. Definitions

The definitions of words and terms as set forth in the FWCL and Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act shall apply to the words and phrases used in the County's Drug-Free Workplace Program unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

- A. This program defines "drug" as: alcohol, including a distilled spirit, wine, a malt beverage, or an intoxicating liquor; an amphetamine; a cannabinoid; cocaine; phencyclidine (PCP); a hallucinogen; methaqualone; an opiate; a barbiturate; a benzodiazepine; a synthetic narcotic; a designer drug; or a metabolite of any of the substances listed in this paragraph. The County may test an employee for any or all such drugs.

- B. This program defines "mandatory-testing position" as: a job assignment that requires the employee to carry a firearm, work closely with an employee who carries a firearm, perform life-threatening procedures, work with heavy or dangerous machinery, work as a safety inspector, work with children, work with detainees in the correctional system, work with confidential information or documents pertaining to criminal investigation, work with controlled substances, or a job assignment that requires an employee security background check, pursuant to s.110.1127, or a job

assignment in which a momentary lapse in attention could result in injury or death to another person. A list of those job classifications determined to be mandatory-testing will be compiled, kept on file, and periodically updated by the Human Resources Department.

- C. This program defines “special-risk position” as: a position that is required to be filled by a person who is certified under chapter 633 or chapter 943. A list of those job classifications determined to be “special-risk” will be compiled, kept on file, and periodically updated by the Human Resources Department.
- D. This program defines “controlled substance” as a controlled substance in schedules I through V of the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. 812) and as further defined in regulations at 21 CFR 1308.11 through 1308.15.

IV. Prohibitions and Responsibilities

- A. Using, consuming, possessing, purchasing, selling, soliciting, distributing, manufacturing, or being impaired or under the influence of controlled substances or drugs on County owned or leased property, while at work, while on duty, during duty hours, while conducting the County’s business, or while operating the County’s vehicles or machinery is a violation of the County’s Drug-Free Workplace Program.

The prohibition of possession or consumption of alcohol upon the County’s property or on duty does not, however, apply to those assignments, premises, or events at which consumption of alcohol is authorized by management. Such authorization does not encourage, sanction, or authorize any individual to consume alcohol in excess to a point of being intoxicated. Therefore, any employee at an event, who in the sole opinion of the management becomes intoxicated may be subject to discipline, must refrain from further consumption of alcohol and, upon request by management must leave the function. Failure to comply with the request constitutes a violation of this program.

- B. Off-duty use of drugs or controlled substances may adversely affect an employee’s job performance or adversely affect or threaten to adversely affect other interests of the County, including but not limited to the employee’s relationship to their job, fellow workers’ reputations, or goodwill in the community. Disciplinary action up to and including dismissal may be imposed on this basis.
- C. An employee whom management reasonably suspects is impaired or under the influence of drugs or controlled substances will be removed immediately from the workplace and will be tested for drugs. In response to a positive drug test, the County will take further action (i.e., further testing, referral to counseling, and/or disciplinary action including dismissal) based

on medical information, work history, and other relevant factors. The determination of appropriate action in each case rests solely with the County.

- D. An employee who has a positive confirmed drug test or otherwise violates the County's Drug-Free Workplace Program may be allowed a one-time opportunity to participate in an Alcohol/Drug Rehabilitation Program or the County's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or other approved program as determined by the County, in lieu of being immediately dismissed based upon such failure. However, allowing the employee to participate in such program in lieu of being dismissed is conditioned upon the employee's meeting the requirements set forth in the program. Furthermore, such an opportunity will not be available to an employee who has previously participated in an Alcohol/Drug Rehabilitation Program, the County's EAP, or other approved, similar program, as an alternative to dismissal. Employees allowed the rehabilitation opportunity described herein may still receive disciplinary action short of dismissal in addition to required participation in the rehabilitation program. Participation in a treatment program, be it entirely voluntary or pursuant to this section, will not excuse additional violations of the County's Drug-Free Program, work rule violations, improper conduct, or poor performance, and an employee may be disciplined or dismissed for such offenses or failure to perform requirements of the treatment program. As to certain departments or employee groups, the County may approve further limits on, or elimination of, the rehabilitation opportunity described above.
- E. An employee's lawful use and possession of legally prescribed drugs or controlled substances does not violate the County's Drug-Free Workplace Program when the employee complies with this section.

Improper use of a legally prescribed drug or controlled substance is prohibited on County owned or leased property, while at work, while on duty, during duty hours, while conducting the County's business, or while operating the County's vehicles or machinery. Improper use includes but is not limited to: using for non-medical purposes, using more than the recommended or prescribed amount, or experiencing side effects or impairment that negatively influence work performance, behavior, or safety. Employees are responsible for knowing the potential effects of their legally prescribed drug or controlled substance.

If an employee is legally prescribed a drug or controlled substance that might negatively influence work performance, behavior, or safety, they must notify their supervisor of the possible impairment before reporting to work impaired or under the influence of such drug or controlled substance. If the County determines that the employee cannot safely perform essential job functions, with or without reasonable accommodations, the

County will place the employee in an appropriate leave status during the period of impairment.

An employee must keep their legally prescribed drugs and controlled substances in the original container if they are possessed on or within County owned or leased property.

The following prohibitions are in effect at all times when an employee is on County owned or leased property, while at work, while on duty, during work hours, while conducting the County's business, or while operating the County's vehicles or machinery:

1. No employee may consume or use medical marijuana.
 2. No employee may possess, purchase, sell, solicit, distribute, or manufacture medical marijuana or associated paraphernalia.
 3. No employee may be impaired or under the influence of medical marijuana.
- F. A positive confirmed drug test, refusal to submit to a drug test, or attempt to tamper with a drug test, is a violation of the County's Drug-Free Workplace Program.
- G. Employees arrested for a drug offense or drug-related incident, as indicated on the arrest report, must notify their supervisor as soon as feasible, but in any event no later than the next business day after the arrest. Failure to comply with this notification requirement is a violation of the County's Drug-Free Workplace Program.
- H. Any employee convicted of a drug statute violation that occurred in the workplace must report it to their supervisor, in writing, no later than 5 calendar days after such conviction. Failure to comply with this notification requirement is a violation of the County's Drug-Free Workplace Program. If an employee works under a federal grant and is convicted of a drug statute violation that occurred in the workplace, the County will notify the granting agency within 10 calendar days after receiving notice of the conviction from an employee or otherwise receiving actual notice of such conviction. The County will commence disciplinary proceedings within 5 calendar days after receiving such notice and appropriate disciplinary action will be determined within 30 calendar days thereafter.
- I. Any violation of the County's Drug-Free Workplace Program can subject an employee to dismissal or other disciplinary action.

V. Testing

- A. Testing of Job Applicants for Mandatory-Testing or Special-Risk Positions

1. Prior to employment, job applicants for mandatory-testing or special-risk positions, whether temporary or permanent, will be tested for the presence of drugs.
2. Any job applicant for a mandatory-testing or special-risk position who refuses to submit to drug testing, refuses to sign the consent form, fails to appear for testing, tampers with the test, or fails to pass the preemployment confirmatory drug test will not be hired and in most cases will be ineligible for hire for a period of at least 2 years.
3. Employees who are not in a mandatory-testing or special-risk position and are selected for a mandatory-testing or special-risk position may not assume the duties of that position, or have the position transfer be made effective, until they have successfully completed a drug test. Failure to successfully complete the drug test when first scheduled will be cause to withdraw the conditional offer of the position and may subject the employee to discipline, up to and including termination. Employees receiving a conditional offer of a position designated as mandatory-testing or special-risk shall report for drug testing within 48 hours of the time they are instructed by Human Resources to do so.

B. Random Testing of Employees in Mandatory-Testing or Special-Risk Positions

1. An Appointing Authority may require an employee in a mandatory-testing or special-risk position to submit to a random drug test if: (1) the employee is selected for testing using a random and unbiased selection procedure, and (2) all employees occupying the mandatory-testing or special-risk position within the Appointing Authority have an equal chance to be selected for testing. The random selection procedure and the frequency of testing will be established by the Chief Human Resources Officer, in consultation with the Appointing Authority. Employees selected for random testing will be notified when they are on-duty and must proceed to the testing site as soon as directed by the department.

C. Reasonable Suspicion Testing

1. “Reasonable suspicion testing” means drug testing based on a belief that an employee is using or has used drugs or controlled substances in violation of the County’s Drug-Free Workplace Program, drawn from specific, objective and articulable facts and reasonable inferences drawn from those facts in light of experience. The department head or designee shall require an employee to undergo drug testing if there is reasonable suspicion that the employee is in violation of the program. Circumstances which constitute a basis for

determining “reasonable suspicion” may include but are not limited to:

- a. Observable phenomena while at work, such as direct observation of drug use or of the physical symptoms or manifestations of being impaired or under the influence of a drug or controlled substance.
 - b. Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior while at work or a significant deterioration in work performance.
 - c. A report of drug or controlled substance use, provided by a reliable and credible source.
 - d. Evidence that an individual has tampered with a drug test during their employment with the current employer.
 - e. Information that an employee has caused, contributed to, or been involved in an accident while at work.
 - f. Evidence that an employee has used, possessed, sold, solicited, or transferred drugs or controlled substances while working or while on the employer’s premises or while operating the employer’s vehicle, machinery, or equipment.
2. If drug testing is conducted based on reasonable suspicion, the County must promptly detail in writing the circumstances which formed the basis of the determination that reasonable suspicion existed to warrant the testing utilizing the Reasonable Suspicion Checklist and any other appropriate documentation. A copy of this documentation shall be given to the employee upon request and the original documentation shall be kept confidential and exempt from the provisions of Fla. Stat. § 119.07(1) and § 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution.
 3. An employee suspected of being impaired or under the influence shall never be permitted to drive a vehicle or operate equipment during any duty shift during the period of suspicion. A supervisor should arrange to transport the employee to/from the collection site and accompany the employee. The Department Director has discretion to place the employee on administrative leave pending receipt of the drug test results or until disciplinary action is taken based on the facts and circumstances of the situation.
 4. Employees whose positions with the County require them to have a commercial driver license, will be required to submit to drug testing, including random testing, in accordance with the Pinellas County

Alcohol and Controlled Substance Testing Policy for Commercial Motor Vehicle Drivers. Subsequent additional testing may be done under the provisions of the County's Drug-Free Workplace Program when warranted.

D. Follow-up Testing

If the employee in the course of employment enters an employee assistance program for drug-related problems, or a drug rehabilitation program, the employer must require the employee to submit to a drug test as a follow-up to such program, unless the employee voluntarily entered the program. In those cases, the employer has the option to not require follow-up testing. If follow-up testing is required, it must be conducted at least once a year for a 2-year period after completion of the program. Advance notice of a follow-up testing date must not be given to the employee to be tested. The County may dismiss an employee based on a positive confirmed follow-up drug test result.

E. Routine Fitness-for-Duty

An employee shall submit to a drug test if the test is conducted as part of a routinely scheduled employee fitness-for-duty medical examination that is routinely scheduled for all members of an employment classification or group.

F. Additional Testing

Additional testing may also be conducted:

1. As required by applicable state or federal laws, rules, or regulations; and/or
2. To the extent that such testing is not prohibited by applicable state or federal laws.

G. Refusal to Test

Employees who refuse to submit to a drug test administered in accordance with this program may forfeit their eligibility for all Workers' Compensation medical and indemnity benefits and will be subject to dismissal or other discipline.

VI. Testing Procedure

A. Tested Substances

The County may test for any or all of the following drugs or their metabolites:

1. Alcohol
2. Amphetamines (commonly referred to as Binhetamine, Desoxyn, Dexedrine)
3. Cannabinoids (commonly referred to as marijuana, hashish)
4. Cocaine
5. Phencyclidine (commonly referred to as PCP)
6. Methaqualone (commonly referred to as Quaalude, Parest, Sopor)
7. Opiates (commonly referred to as opium, heroin, morphine, codeine)
8. Barbiturates (commonly referred to as Phenobarbital, Tuinal, Amytal)
9. Benzodiazepines (commonly referred to as Ativan, Azene, Clonopin, Dalmane, Diazepam, Halcion, Librium, Poxipam, Restoril, Serax, Tranxene, Valium, Vertron, Xanax)
10. Methadone (commonly referred to as Dolophine, Methadose)
11. Propoxyphene (commonly referred to as Darvocet, Darvon N, Dolene)

B. Consent Required

Job applicants for mandatory-testing and special-risk positions and current employees required to test under reasonable suspicion, follow-up, or other testing will be asked to sign a Consent To Testing form. Refusal to execute the consent form constitutes a refusal to be tested, and will subject the employee/applicant to dismissal/failure to hire.

C. Designated Laboratory

Because of the potential adverse consequences of positive test results on employees, the County will employ a very accurate testing program. Specimen samples will be analyzed by a highly qualified, independent laboratory which has been selected by the County and certified by the appropriate regulatory agency.

The laboratory used to analyze initial or confirmation specimens will be licensed or certified by the appropriate regulatory agencies to perform such tests.

The name and address of the certified laboratory currently used by the County is on file with the County Human Resources Department.

D. Notification of Prescription Drug Use

Applicants and employees will be given an opportunity, prior to and after testing, on a confidential basis, to provide any information to the Medical Review Officer (MRO) they consider relevant to the test including identification of currently or recently used prescription and non-prescription medications or other relevant medical information on a Drug Use Information Form. This program also provides notice of the most common medication by brand name or common name, as well as the chemical name which may alter or affect a drug test.

The Medical Review Officer will provide confidential assistance to the employee or job applicant for the purpose of interpreting any positive confirmed test result to determine whether the result could have been caused by prescription or nonprescription medication taken by the employee or job applicant.

E. Testing of Injured Employees

An employee injured at work and required to be tested, under reasonable suspicion, will be taken to a medical facility for immediate treatment of injury. If the injured employee is not at a designated collection site, the employee will be transported to one as soon as it is medically feasible and specimens will be obtained. If it is not medically feasible to move the injured employee, specimens will be obtained at the treating facility under the procedures set forth in this program and transported to an approved testing laboratory. No specimen will be taken prior to the administration of emergency medical care. An injured employee must authorize release to the County of the result of any tests conducted for the purpose of showing the presence of drugs.

F. Cost of Testing

The County must pay the cost of initial and confirmation drug tests, which it requires of employees and job applicants. An employee or job applicant must pay the cost of any additional drug test not required by the County.

G. Collection Site

1. The County will utilize a collection site designated by an approved laboratory which has all necessary personnel, materials, equipment, facilities, and supervision to provide for the collection, security, chain of custody procedures, temporary storage, and shipping or transportation of urine and blood specimens to an approved drug testing laboratory. The County may also utilize a medical facility which meets the applicable requirements as a collection site.

2. Security of the collection site, chain of custody procedures, privacy of the individual, collection control, integrity and identity of the specimen, and transportation of the specimen to the laboratory as applicable will meet FWCL guidelines.

H. Time to Report for Testing

Upon notification by management representatives that a drug test is required, the employee will report to the test site as designated by management no later than 4 hours after notification, sign the appropriate consent forms, and submit to the test.

VII. Test Results

- A. Every specimen that produces a positive, confirmed test result shall be preserved by the licensed or certified laboratory that conducted the confirmation test for a period of at least 210 days after the result of the test was mailed or otherwise delivered to the Medical Review Officer. However, if an employee or job applicant undertakes an administrative or legal challenge to the test result, the employee or job applicant shall notify the laboratory and the sample shall be retained by the laboratory until the case or administrative appeal is settled. During the 180-day period after written notification of a positive test result, the employee or job applicant who has provided the specimen shall be permitted by the employer to have a portion of the specimen retested, at the employee's or job applicant's expense, at another laboratory, which is licensed and approved by the Agency for Health Care Administration, and is chosen by the employee or job applicant. The second laboratory must test at equal or greater sensitivity for the drug in question as the first laboratory. The first laboratory that performed the test for the employer is responsible for the transfer of the portion of the specimen to be retested, and for the integrity of the chain of custody during such transfer.
- B. The Medical Review Officer shall notify the employee or job applicant of a confirmed positive test result within 3 calendar days of receipt of the test result from the laboratory and provide an opportunity for the employee or job applicant to discuss the positive test result and any prescribed or over-the-counter medication that could have caused the positive test result with the Medical Review Officer within 5 calendar days of notification. If the employee's or job applicant's explanation or challenge is unsatisfactory to the medical review officer, the medical review officer shall report a positive test result back to the County.
- C. Within 5 working days after receipt of a positive confirmed test result from the Medical Review Officer, the County shall inform an employee or job applicant in writing of such positive test result, the consequences of such

results, and the options available to the employee or job applicant. The County shall provide to the employee or job applicant, upon request, a copy of the test results.

- D. Within 5 working days after receipt of a positive confirmed test result, an employee or job applicant may submit information to the County explaining or contesting the test result and explaining why the result does not constitute a violation of the County's Drug-Free Workplace Program.
- E. If the employee's or job applicant's explanation or challenge of the positive test result is unsatisfactory to the County, a written explanation as to why the employee's or job applicant's explanation is unsatisfactory, along with the report of positive result, will be provided by the County to the employee or job applicant; and all such documentation shall be kept confidential and exempt from the provisions of Fla. Stat. § 119.07(1) and § 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution.
- F. The County may not dismiss, discipline, refuse to hire, discriminate against, or request or require rehabilitation of an employee or job applicant on the sole basis of a positive test result that has not been verified by a confirmation test and by a Medical Review Officer.
- G. Employees may challenge employment decisions made pursuant to this program as may be authorized by County Personnel Rules and Policies, or applicable court.

VIII. Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

- A. The County regards its employees as its most important asset. Accordingly, the County maintains an EAP which provides help to employees who suffer from alcohol or drug abuse and other personal or emotional problems. Employees with such problems should seek confidential assistance from the EAP or other community resources before drug or alcohol problems lead to disciplinary action. Look for contact information on the EAP and other community resources on the Human Resources website.
- B. However, use of the EAP or other community resources will not shield the employee from appropriate disciplinary action for violations of the County's Drug-Free Workplace Program if such violations come to the County's attention through other means, including, but not limited to, reports from employees or outsiders, direct observation, or drug testing.
- C. Employees referred to the EAP as a result of a first violation of the County's Program may, at the County's discretion, be allowed to continue

their employment with the County provided they contact the EAP and strictly adhere to all the terms of treatment and counseling.

- D. If an employee in a mandatory-testing position enters an EAP or drug rehabilitation program, the employee must be assigned to a position other than a mandatory-testing position or, if such position is not available, the employee must be placed on leave while the employee is participating in the program. However, the employee shall be entitled to use any accumulated annual leave before leave without pay is ordered.
- E. An employee in a special-risk position may be discharged or disciplined for the first positive confirmed test result if the drug confirmed is an illicit drug under s.893.03. A special-risk employee who is participating in an EAP or drug rehabilitation program may not be allowed to continue to work in any special-risk or mandatory-testing positions but may be assigned to a position other than a mandatory-testing position or placed on leave while the employee is participating in the program. However, the employee shall be permitted to use any accumulated annual leave before leave without pay is ordered.
- F. Participation in any evaluation, treatment, or counseling program will be at the employee's expense unless participation in that particular program is required by the County, or unless the employee is entitled to such benefits under the terms of the County's group health plan or by other available benefits.
- G. The County will not discharge, discipline, or discriminate against an employee solely based upon that employee voluntarily seeking treatment, while under the employ of the County, for a drug-related problem if the employee has not previously tested positive for drug use, entered an employee assistance program for drug-related problems, or entered a drug rehabilitation program. Unless otherwise provided by a collective bargaining agreement, the County may select the employee assistance program or drug rehabilitation program if the County pays the cost of the employee's participation in the program.

IX. Confidentiality

- A. Except as otherwise provided by the FWCL, all information, interviews, reports, statements, memoranda, and drug test results, written or otherwise, received or produced as a result of a drug-testing program are confidential and exempt from the provisions of Fla. Stat. § 119.07(1) and § 24(a), Art. I of the State Constitution, and may not be used or received in evidence, obtained in discovery, or disclosed in any public or private proceedings, except in accordance with the FWCL or in determining compensability under Chapter 440, Fla. Stat.

B. The County, laboratories, medical review officers, employee assistance programs, drug rehabilitation programs, and their agents may not release any information concerning drug test results obtained pursuant to the County's Drug-Free Workplace Program without a written consent form signed voluntarily by the person tested, unless such release is compelled by an administrative law judge, a hearing officer, or a court of competent jurisdiction pursuant to an appeal taken under the FWCL or is deemed appropriate by a professional or occupational licensing board in a related disciplinary proceeding. The consent form must contain, at a minimum:


1. The name of the person who is authorized to obtain the information.
2. The purpose of the disclosure.
3. The precise information to be disclosed.
4. The duration of the consent.
5. The signature of the person authorizing release of the information.

C. The FWCL does not prohibit the County, an agent of the County, or laboratory conducting a drug test from having access to employee drug test information or using such information when consulting with legal counsel in connection with actions brought under or related to the FWCL or when the information is relevant to its defense in a civil or administrative matter.

X. Records and Training

The County will maintain a current resource file of providers of employee assistance including alcohol and drug abuse programs, mental health providers, and various other persons, entities or organizations designed to assist employees with personal or behavioral problems. The County will inform employees and new hires about various employee assistance programs that the employer may have available. The information shall be made available at a reasonable time convenient to the County in a manner that permits discreet review by the employee.

E TO: The Honorable Chair and Members of the Unified Personnel Board

FROM: Wade Childress, Chief Human Resources Officer 

DATE: April 16, 2026

SUBJECT: Revisions to Unified Personnel Board Policy 11: Grievance Process and Personnel Rule 7: Employee Grievances

Recommendation:

I recommend the changes to Unified Personnel Board Policy 11: Grievance Process and Personnel Rule 7: Employee Grievances described below and found in the attached documents. The Appointing Authorities and Employees' Advisory Council concur with these recommendations.

Background:

The Unified Personnel Board Policy 11: Grievance Process and the Personnel Rule 7: Employee Grievances have been updated to reflect the proposed changes in the Grievance Panel's structure. The revised policy removes the Human Resources Representative (previously a rotating HR Manager) from serving as both Chair and a voting member of the Grievance Panel. Instead, we introduced a facilitator from the HR Employee Relations team who is well-versed in the grievance process to ensure consistent and effective facilitation. However, because this individual may have prior knowledge of the disciplinary action, they will not participate in the panel's final decision-making. Additionally, previously serving as both Chair and a voting member while simultaneously evaluating testimony presents practical challenges. This change also helps reduce any perception of bias.

We also renamed the Informal Grievance Committee to the Grievance Panel to better reflect its role. Additional changes were made to the panel composition and scheduling time plus some grammatical updates. Please see changes highlighted in the attached policy and rule.

Attachments:

- Unified Personnel Board Policy 11: Grievance Process redline version
- Personnel Rule 7: Employee Grievances redline version



EMPLOYEE POLICIES & PROCEDURES

UNIFIED PERSONNEL BOARD POLICY #11 Grievance Process

Personnel Rule 7 Employee Grievances provides Unified Personnel System Classified Service employees with a mechanism to raise a grievance regarding a work-related issue. This policy sets out how departments and employees are to follow through on the various steps of the grievance process. This policy is not intended to supersede or change Personnel Rule 7, but is provided as a tool to make the process a little easier to understand and use.

When an employee believes they have a work-related complaint as outlined in Personnel Rule 7, the employee is encouraged to attempt to resolve the issue through informal methods with his/her immediate supervisor. If the issue is not resolved, then the employee may seek remedy through formal means by submitting a grievance, in writing, to the Department Director within 15 calendar days of the time the employee (hereinafter grieving employee) first became aware of the aggrieved situation.

Note: Supervisors are encouraged to allow a grieving employee a reasonable amount of time to consult with Human Resources regarding the grievance process.

Step 1 - Department Head

If the grieving employee believes the issue was not remedied through informal means, ~~he or she~~ they may submit a grievance to ~~his or her~~ their Department Head on the form established by the Human Resources Department. The completed form must be submitted within 15 calendar days of the time the employee first became aware of the aggrieved situation. This is Step 1 of the Grievance Process.

The Department Head will deliver a written response to the employee within seven calendar days from when the employee submits the grievance form.

If the employee is dissatisfied with the Department Head's response, or does not receive a response within seven calendar days, the employee may proceed to Step 2 - ~~Informal~~ Grievance Panel (unless the grievance matter is restricted to resolution at Step 1 per Personnel Rule 7).

Step 2 - ~~Informal~~ Grievance ~~Committee~~ Panel

If the employee is dissatisfied with the Department Head's response, or receives no response within seven calendar days, the employee may, within 15 calendar days, ask the Chief Human Resources Officer to schedule a hearing before ~~an the Informal~~ Grievance ~~Committee~~ Panel. The first day of the fifteen days begins the day after the Department Head's response is received. If no response is received, the first day of the 15 days is the eighth day after the written grievance form is submitted to the Department Head.

Grievance Process

The **Informal** Grievance **Committee Panel** will consist of five employees and will be convened by the Chief Human Resources Officer. It will be composed as follows:

- Two Classified Service employees
- One Appointing Authority representative
- ~~One~~ Two Exempt Service employees
- ~~One~~ A Human Resources representative, who shall chair the committee who is familiar with the process, will facilitate the hearing and will not be part of the decision vote.*

*In cases where a Grievant requesting their grievance to be heard at Step 2 is a Classified employee in the Human Resources Department, the Chief Human Resources Officer shall consult with the Chair of the Unified Personnel Board to address potential conflicts of interest.

The pool from which the Classified Service employees are chosen will be provided by the Employees' Advisory Council on an annual basis and updated as needed. This list will be reviewed annually; however, additions and deletions can be made at any time. The Chief Human Resources Officer will compile a list of six employees who are not employed in the grieving employee's department from this pool. The grievant may strike two employees from the list. The Department Head or designee may then strike two additional employees from the list. The remaining two employees will serve on the **Informal** Grievance **Committee Panel** as the Classified Service representatives.

The pool of Exempt Service employees to be used will be compiled from lists provided by each Appointing Authority on an annual basis and updated as needed. This list will be reviewed annually; however, additions and deletions can be made at any time. The Chief Human Resources Officer will compile a list of ~~three~~ six employees who are not employed in the grieving employee's department from this pool but with a preference for exempt employees within the Appointing Authority of the grieving employee. The grievant may strike ~~one~~ two employees from the list. The Appointing Authority or designee may strike an additional two employees from the list. The remaining two employees will serve on the **Informal** Grievance **Committee Panel** as the Exempt Service representatives.

The Appointing Authority will serve on, or designate a representative to serve on, the **committee Panel**.

The Chief Human Resources Officer will designate a member of the Human Resources Department to serve as **Chair** **Facilitator** of the **committee Panel**.

The Chief Human Resources Officer will schedule the **Informal** Grievance **Panel** Hearing within ~~30~~ 60 calendar days of the grieving employee's request. Either the employee or the department may request the Chief Human Resources Officer to reschedule the hearing if necessary.

The hearing is subject to the Florida Sunshine Law (F.S. 286.011, et. seq.). Parties shall limit issues brought forth to those which relate to the grievance. The **Chair** **Facilitator** will document the process.

Grievance Process

The order of presentation during the grievance will be:

- Employee will state his/her their case
- Panel may question the employee and/or witnesses already called
- Management will state its case
- Panel may question management's representative and/or witnesses already called
- Dialogue between all parties, last opportunity to ask questions
- Closing statements by each party, grievant and then management

Following the presentations, the Informal Grievance Committee Panel will deliberate and reach a decision. The decision of the Committee Panel will be announced at the conclusion of the hearing and a written decision of the Committee Panel shall be provided to the parties within ten calendar days of the conclusion of the hearing.

If either party is dissatisfied with the decision, the party may appeal the Informal Grievance Committee's Panel's decision to the Unified Personnel Board unless Personnel Rule 7 does not allow. Requests for appeal must be made in writing on the form provided by the Human Resources Department to the Chief Human Resources Officer within 15 calendar days of the date of the written decision of the Informal Grievance Committee Panel.

Step 3 - Personnel Board

Hearings before the Unified Personnel Board follow procedures as specified in the Unified Personnel Board Appeal Procedures of the Pinellas County Unified Personnel Board.

Decisions rendered by the Unified Personnel Board are final.



Rule 7. Employee Grievances

A. Applicability and Purpose

1. This rule applies to employees in the Classified Service.
2. The purpose of this rule is to establish a process through which an employee may seek redress for covered issues relating to ~~his or her~~ their employment and to improve employee-management relations through a fair method of resolving problems.
3. When appeal, complaint, or grievance procedures are otherwise established for a particular issue or subject, those procedures shall apply.

B. Non-Retaliation

Employees shall not be subjected to retaliation for using or participating in the grievance process.

C. Time for Grievance

The Appointing Authority shall allow the aggrieved employee reasonable time to consult with the Human Resources Department and participate in the grievance process. However, the Appointing Authority is not required to provide the grievant unlimited work time to prepare or participate in the process. Time approved by an Appointing Authority during normal duty hours shall not be charged against the employee. Except for time at an informal grievance panel hearing, time spent by a grievant outside of the employee's normal duty hours shall not be counted as hours worked.

D. Guidance

Human Resources staff may advise the employees and Appointing Authorities regarding the grievance and appeal process but shall not act as a representative or advocate for either.

E. Covered issues and Level of Appeal Available

A Classified Service employee may grieve:

1. Discipline (Level 1 – 3);
2. A misapplication of a Personnel Rule or Unified Personnel Board Policy, as applied to the grievant;
3. A misapplication of an established departmental policy, procedure, or rule if that policy, procedure, or rule was approved by the Unified Personnel Board, as applied to the grievant;
4. Formally documented records of performance as determined under the County's prescribed performance management system;
5. Discretionary pay increase decisions.

Level of Appeal Available

Grievance Issue	Informal Resolution	Step 1: Department Head	Step 2: Informal Grievance Committee Panel	Step 3: Unified Personnel Board
Discipline: Level 1	Yes	Yes	No	No
Discipline: Level 2	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Discipline: Level 3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Misapplication of Personnel Rule or Unified Personnel Board Policy	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Misapplication of department policy, procedure, or rule (if approved by the Unified Personnel Board)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Formally documented record of performance	Yes	Yes	No	No
Discretionary pay increase decision	Yes	Yes	No	No

F. Exceptions

1. Dismissals are not subject to grievance. Dismissals of regular status employees may be appealed directly to the Unified Personnel Board pursuant to Rule 6.
2. Demotions for inability of regular status employees during the first six months after a promotion are not subject to grievance.
3. Layoffs and displacements under Rule 5 are not subject to grievance.
4. Deferred or denied pay increases under Rule 3 C.1.e. are not pay reductions under this Rule.

G. Procedure for Grievance

Unless appeal, complaint, or grievance procedures are otherwise established for the particular issue or subject, the following procedure applies.

1. **Filing:** Grievances starting with Step 1 must be filed in writing on the forms provided by the Human Resources Department.
2. **Timing:** All steps in the grievance process must be taken within the time frames specified.
 - a. A grievance must be initiated as described within 15 calendar days from when the employee first becomes aware of the aggrieved situation.

- b. Failure of an employee to timely file a grievance or timely initiate any step in the process will result in rejection of the grievance without further action. Such rejection is final.

3. Process:

If the end date falls on a weekend or County holiday, the due date shall be the next weekday.

a. Informal Resolution

An employee is encouraged to attempt resolution for ~~his or her~~ their issue with the immediate supervisor or other appropriate level of management in ~~his or her~~ their Department before proceeding to a formal grievance. In cases where the issue is not resolved, an employee may, within 15 calendar days of when the employee first becomes aware of the aggrieved situation, start the process at Step 1.

b. Step 1: Department Head

- i. Grievant submits written grievance on the established Human Resources form to the Department Head.
- ii. The Department Head should consider the grievance and discuss it with the employee and other management, if necessary, to reach a decision. The Department Head's decision must be delivered in writing to the employee on a copy of the grievance form submitted by the employee.
- iii. The Department Head's response must be delivered within seven calendar days from the date the employee submits the form.
- iv. If the employee is dissatisfied with management's response, or does not receive a response within seven calendar days of the date the employee submitted his grievance form to the Department Head, the employee may proceed to Step 2 (unless the subject matter is limited to resolution at Step 1).

c. Step 2: ~~Informal~~ Grievance ~~Committee~~ Panel

- i. Grievant files a written request within 15 calendar days on the established Human Resources Department form to appeal the Department Head's decision to the Chief Human Resources Officer. The request must include a copy of the Department Head's response from Step 1. If no response was received, the Grievant must state so in the written request and must attach the form from Step 1.
- ii. Upon receipt of a proper and timely request to appeal, the Chief Human Resources Officer shall convene an ~~Informal~~ Grievance ~~Committee~~ Panel in accordance with established Unified Personnel Board policy.
- iii. The ~~Informal~~ Grievance ~~Committee~~ Panel hearing shall be scheduled by the Chief Human Resources Officer within ~~30~~ 60 calendar days from the date grievant files the request to appeal the Department Head's response. Continuances for good cause shown may be granted by the Chief Human Resources Officer.
- iv. The complete hearing shall be conducted in the Sunshine, in accordance with Florida Statute Chapter 286.
- v. The hearing shall be a fact-finding hearing at which both parties have the opportunity to be heard in person, to be represented by lay person or counsel,

and to introduce testimony and evidence. Informal Grievance Committee Panel hearings shall be conducted in accordance with Unified Personnel Board procedures.


- vi. The result of the hearing shall be announced at the conclusion of the hearing.
- vii. The written decision of the Informal Grievance Committee Panel shall be provided to the parties within 10 calendar days from the conclusion of the hearing.
- viii. An employee dissatisfied with the Informal Grievance Committee Panel decision may proceed to Step 3 (unless the subject matter is limited to resolution at Step 2).

d. Step 3: Unified Personnel Board Appeal of Grievance Hearing

- i. Except as provided herein, either party may appeal the decision of the Informal Grievance Committee Panel to the Unified Personnel Board by filing a written notice of appeal with the Chief Human Resources Officer within 15 calendar days of the date of the written decision of the Informal Grievance Committee Panel.
- ii. Failure to appeal within 15 calendar days shall be deemed voluntary waiver of a party's appeal right.
- iii. Unified Personnel Board appeals from Informal Grievance Committee Panel decisions shall be conducted in accordance with the Unified Personnel Board's Appeal Procedures.

Human Resources
Unified Personnel System
Wade Childress
Chief Human Resources Officer

TO: The Honorable Chair and Members of the Unified Personnel Board

FROM: Wade Childress, Chief Human Resources Officer 

DATE: April 16, 2026

SUBJECT: End Market Driven Skill Supplement

Recommendation:

I recommend that the members of the Unified Personnel Board approve the removal of the Market Driven Skill Supplements (MDSS) of the below classifications. These supplements will be rolled into the base salary as a permanent market adjustment.

- 911 Public Safety Center Supervisor 1 – 7%
- 911 Public Safety Telecommunicator – 7%
- 911 Public Safety Telecommunicator, Lead – 7%
- Airport Firefighter – 10%
- Airport Fire Lieutenant – 10%
- Law Enforcement Telecommunicator – 3%


Background:

The market driven skills supplements (MDSS) are an optional pay supplement with a variable rate not to exceed 10% of the employee's base rate for an employee that is proficient and engaged in work that requires the use of critical skill sets that are in short supply within the available labor market. The Chief Human Resources Officer and Appointing Authority will determine when an approved skill set is no longer in short supply or is no longer deemed a critical skill set and recommend the Unified Personnel Board remove the skill set from those identified for eligibility for MDSS. Upon Unified Personnel Board approval, the supplemental pay will be ended.

Due to the additional compensation strategy of market adjustments being approved by the UPB and added to Rule 3: Compensation in 2023, there is now a more appropriate base pay adjustment. The 3%, 7%, and 10% supplements have been on the classifications for over 5 years making it more appropriate to adjust the base pay of the positions.

Human Resources
Unified Personnel System
Wade Childress
Chief Human Resources Officer

TO: The Honorable Chair and Members of the Unified Personnel Board

FROM: Wade Childress, Chief Human Resources Officer 

DATE: April 16, 2026

SUBJECT: Human Resources Promotional Appointment to Exempt Role

Members of the Unified Personnel Board approved the use of several BTS classifications within the Human Resources department during the August 7, 2025, meeting. These positions are to support the movement of Pinellas County Government to a new Enterprise Solution Planning (ERP) software system hosted by Workday.

To effectively support this project, Human Resources has identified an internal employee to be promoted into the exempt role of Application Analyst, E22. This employee has been leading the Workday design and implementation meetings for the benefits division and actively participating in all HR implementation meetings. She is also attending specialized Workday training and actively supporting all aspects of the project with a focus on benefits. The selected individual brings ten years of Human Resources experience, a Master's of Business Administration, SHRM-CP certification, and Lean Six Sigma Green Belt.



Human Resources

HR Update for April (February - March 2026 Updates)

HR Updates

- Wade Childress participated in a total of 16 Employee Forums and 2 Manager Forums with County Administrator Barry Burton.
- HR held their In-Service Day on April 1, featuring a combination of training, group activities, and volunteer opportunities. The team had the option of volunteering at Animal Services, picking up litter at Sand Key Park, or returning to the office to work.

Benefits & Wellness

- **Free Screening Kits** – Letters were mailed by Cologuard to eligible employees and their eligible dependents on the County medical plan that they will receive a free at-home colorectal cancer screening kit. Kits were shipped on April 1.
- **Onsite Screenings** – We currently have 14 onsite biometric screening events scheduled with some reserved for site-specific employees. AdventHealth's mammogram bus, OnSpot Dermatology, and Jet Dental are offering screenings in April. Mammograms, skin screenings, and dental checkups are all eligible to earn Wellness Incentive rewards.
- **Wellness Center Open House** – The Wellness team hosted an Open House at the downtown Clearwater Wellness Center on March 24 for nearly 70 employees, volunteers, and retirees. Activities included orientations for new members, fitness class demos, free assisted stretching, info tables with representatives from employee benefit and wellness resources, and more.
- **Financial Wellness Resources** – In partnership with the County's financial advisor, Wealthspire, we hosted a 6 Steps to Financial Success webinar on April 7 to over 50 participants. In addition, we developed a financial wellness resource page with a list of 40+ resources and an informational webpage on the financial advisor.

Employee Communications & Volunteer Services

- **Volunteer Bike Ride** – We hosted a bike ride event on March 7 at John Taylor Park for Pinellas County Government volunteers. It was a success, and we received some wonderful feedback from site coordinators and volunteers. We plan to offer more events in the future to bring connection to the volunteer group.
- **eCalendar Photo Contest Concluded** – We hosted an eCalendar Photo Contest for employees to submit their nature photos for a chance to be featured in an upcoming desktop wallpaper calendar. We received 360 photos from over 100 employees. Winners will be announced in the last Weekly Digest email of the month, beginning in June.
- **Food Drive at Employee Appreciation Picnic** – In partnership with County Administration and Human Services, we will be collecting canned goods for Hope Villages of America Food Bank at the Employee Appreciation Picnic on April 29 at Sand Key Park.
- **New Software Slogan Contest** – Pinellas County is launching our new ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software platform by Workday for HR, payroll, and finance. To build excitement and engagement across the organization, employees are invited to help create the official project slogan.
- **Scholarship Available to Children of Pinellas County Employees** – As president of the Florida Association of Counties, Commissioner Dr. Rene Flowers will select an eligible child of a Pinellas County employee and high school senior to be the recipient of a \$2,500 scholarship. Note: Children of employees of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, Property Appraiser, Supervisor of Elections, and Tax Collector are not eligible.

Learning & Development

- **Leadership Development** – On February 23, we met with 15 Countywide leaders to share our strategy for leadership growth to ensure leaders are equipped to support their teams and build strong workplaces.
- **New Course Topics** – We are introducing blended learning experiences that combine self-paced learning with live discussion and practical application.
 - Own Your Career Growth (virtual 3-part series), March 25, April 2, and April 8
 - Stress Management for Leaders: Supporting Yourself and Your Team (on demand)
 - Performance Management: Giving and Receiving Feedback (on demand)
 - Supervisor Toolkit: Wellness, EAP, FMLA & Disability, Compensation, Hiring Top Talent, Workplace Bullying, Reasonable Suspicion, Corrective Behavior, Employee Discipline, and Handling Employee Grievances (on demand)
- **Public Works Leadership Foundations Graduation** – Twenty-one aspiring and emerging leaders recently completed the 12-month Public Works Leadership Foundations program, strengthening core leadership skills such as trust-building, communication, accountability, delegation, coaching, and mentoring. During the graduation event, participants shared growth and impact stories, engaged in cross-departmental networking, and received insights and encouragement from Public Works leadership. We are grateful for the partnership between Learning & Development, Public Works' leadership, and HR Business Partners that made this program possible.
- **University Partnerships** – We are working on a partnership with the University of Phoenix for continuing education and career growth, and the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences to expand practical, field-based learning for park rangers, including topics such as identifying poisonous snakes and other wildlife, environmental awareness, and safety considerations when working in our parks and natural areas.
- **Toastmasters Club Begins April 8** – We are starting a Toastmasters club for employees to practice their public speaking, develop their leadership skills, and grow both personally and professionally. The first meeting is April 8 from 1:00 – 2:00 p.m. at the Annex building, 400 South Fort Harrison Avenue, Room 429, Clearwater.

Recruitment

- **Job Fairs** – The Recruitment team participated in job fairs at Eckerd College, University of South Tampa, and St. Petersburg College (Gibbs Campus) in March to increase awareness of career opportunities and strengthen the candidate pipeline. The team also supported a court shadowing day for students from University of Central Florida and Florida State University, providing direct exposure to public sector career pathways.

HR Technology, Compensation, & Operations

- Employment statistics for February are:
 - Time to fill: 63.23 days
 - New hires: 38
 - Promotions: 20
 - Separations: 42 (12 terminations, 10 retirements and 20 resignations)
 - County-wide year-to-date annualized turnover is 15.7% and the rolling 12-month turnover is 13.6%.
 - Human Resources department's rolling 12-month turnover is 14.7% as of the end of February.



**Chief Human Resources Officer
Action Taken Under Authority Delegated by the Unified Personnel Board**

The Chief Human Resources Officer, having been granted delegated authority to act on behalf of the Unified Personnel Board, has taken the following actions from **February 22, 2026 through March 21, 2026**.

ADDITIONS

Spec No.	Title	EEO4 Code	OT Code	PG
17083	Customer Services Specialist 1	Administrative Support	Classified	C16
17085	Customer Services Specialist 2	Administrative Support	Classified	C18
17087	Customer Services Specialist 3	Administrative Support	Classified	C20
17089	Customer Services Training Specialist	Professionals	Classified	C22
17041	Utilities Communications Coordinator	Professionals	Classified	C24

PAY GRADE CHANGE

Spec No.	Title	Old PG	New PG
12994	Fleet Fuel Systems Specialist	C20	C21
13784	Electronics Specialist 2	C24	C26
20572	GIS Cadastralist 1	C20	C24
20574	GIS Cadastralist 2	C22	C26
20576	GIS Cadastralist 3	C25	C28

CAREER LADDER ADDITION

BCC: Utilities New Career Ladder
Customer Services Specialist 1 (C16) → Customer Services Specialist 2 (C18) → Customer Services Specialist 3 (C20)