



## EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

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A GUIDE TO PERSONNEL POLICIES  
AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

Approved by the Board of Directors on  
February 28, 2023

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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### SECTION 1: PERSONNEL POLICIES

1.1 Disclaimer	3
1.2 Introduction	3
1.3 Employment Status Definitions and Classification	4
1.4 Recruitment	5
1.5 Compensation	6
1.6 Orientation	6
1.7 Performance Appraisal Process	7
1.8 Work Schedule	8
1.9 Holiday Time	8
1.10 Paid Time Off	9
1.11 Leaves of Absence	11
1.12 Benefits	12
1.13 Employment Separation	13
1.14 Grievance Procedure	14
1.15 Non-Harassment Policy	15
1.16 Tobacco and Other Drugs	16
1.17 Professional Standards and Conflict of Interest	16
1.18 Confidentiality of Information	17
1.19 Non-Disparagement Policy	17
1.20 Whistleblower Policy	17

## SECTION 2: OPERATING PROCEDURES

2.1 Employee Responsibilities	20
2.2 Employee Behavior	20
2.3 Facilities, Equipment, and Vehicles	20
2.4 Personal Appearance	21
2.5 Travel Policy	21
2.6 Firearms Ban	22
2.7 Workplace Violence Prevention	23
2.8 Internet, Computer, and E-mail Usage, and Social Media Policy	24
2.9 Other Policies	26
2.10 Changes to This Manual	26
2.11 Acknowledgment of Receipt	27

## SECTION 1: PERSONNEL POLICIES

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### 1.1 DISCLAIMER

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Rooted WI, Inc. (“Rooted”) has adopted this handbook as a guide to both new and current Rooted employees about policies, work rules, and benefits enjoyed by Rooted employees. This handbook is a revision of the previous Rooted handbook, adopted by the Community GroundWorks Board of Directors in 2010 and incorporated by the Rooted Board of Directors at the time of merger on January 1, 2020. These policies, guidelines, and benefit descriptions, as well as other written or verbal communications, do not represent or create contractual terms of employment, an agreement of employment for a definite period of time, or a warranty of benefits. Notwithstanding the provisions of the personnel policies in this handbook, all employees are “at will employees,” meaning that any employee or Rooted may end the employment relationship at any time and for any reason. Rooted may also, at any time, change the provisions of this handbook. This handbook is not and shall not be construed as a legally enforceable or binding commitment concerning the terms of your employment. Rooted remains free to change wages and all other conditions of employment and continues to have the right to discharge employees for any nondiscriminatory reason with or without cause.

Employees are expected to read this employee handbook and to be familiar with the policies detailed herein.

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### 1.2 INTRODUCTION

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#### ***Welcome to Rooted***

In December 2019, the Community GroundWorks and Center for Resilient Cities boards of directors approved the formal merger of the two organizations, effective January 1, 2020. Community GroundWorks was acquired by Center for Resilient Cities and ceased to exist as an independent entity. Center for Resilient Cities, the surviving entity, has been renamed *Rooted WI, Inc. (d/b/a Rooted)*.

**Mission statement:** Collaborations rooted in food, land, and learning.

**Vision statement:** People growing and thriving in healthy, equitable, and sustainable communities.

**Tagline:** Growing community. Together.

**Values:** See current values document.

As a staff member of Rooted, you will have an opportunity to learn, contribute, and grow professionally. Rooted recognizes the importance of each employee's contribution to the organization. We strive to hire the best employees and expect that each employee will make a positive contribution to the team and will conduct themselves in the best interest of the organization.

As an employee of Rooted, we hope you find your employment to be enjoyable, challenging, and rewarding.

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## 1.3 EMPLOYMENT STATUS DEFINITIONS AND CLASSIFICATION

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### EMPLOYMENT STATUS DEFINITIONS

1. **Exempt Employees:** Exempt employees are not covered by the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). In general, bona fide executive, administrative, or professional employees paid on a salaried basis are exempt from the FLSA.
2. **Nonexempt Employees:** Employees who perform work other than executive, administrative, or professional, as defined by the FLSA, must receive overtime pay for overtime work, that is actual work over 40 hours in any work week.
3. **Regular Employment Status:** Regular employees are those whose positions continue without a predetermined end, subject to job requirements, employee conduct, available funding, the employee's effective performance, and Rooted's needs.

### EMPLOYMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

Each Rooted position is classified as set forth below. All classifications are indicated on the position description.

- 1) **Regular employees** are classified as **full-time** or **part-time**. Full-time employees are those employees regularly scheduled to work 40 hours or more per week. Part-time employees are those employees regularly scheduled to work fewer than 40 hours per week.
- 2) **Limited-term employees** are employees whose position at the time of hire is for a specified period of time less than one year.
- 3) Consultants or persons receiving contracts to provide services are not employees. Independent contractors and consultants are paid on a fee-for-service basis to perform certain specified services. Contractors and consultants are not eligible for any benefits listed in this handbook.
- 4) Limited-term staff, interns, trainees, volunteers, and fellows are not regular employees, and are not eligible for benefits except as required by law.

Employees may be paid on a **salaried** or **hourly** basis, in conformity with applicable law.

Rooted provides, in its sole and exclusive discretion, certain benefits to its employees. The voluntary benefits are subject to change at any time and are only available to employees who have completed their orientation period (see “Orientation” below) subject the following criteria. Generally, full-time employees are eligible for the voluntary benefits listed in this handbook. Part-time employees regularly scheduled to work at least 20 hours but less than 40 hours per week are eligible for voluntary benefits in proportion to their scheduled hours, again subject to the sole discretion of Rooted. Part-time employees regularly scheduled to work less than 20 hours per week and temporary employees are not eligible for voluntary benefits.

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## 1.4 RECRUITMENT

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### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY**

The policy and intent of Rooted is to provide equal employment opportunity to all persons regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, sex, age, or other status protected by federal, state, or local law.

Employees are selected based on ability or assessed potential to meet the specific job-related requirements as stated in the job description. Candidates’ compatibility with and passion for Rooted’s stated mission are also considered. Either the Board of Directors or the Executive Director makes all the employee and consultant appointments.

Rooted’s Board of Directors will manage the hiring process for a new Executive Director. The Executive Director and the Deputy Directors will manage the hiring process for all other vacancies at Rooted. When a new regular full-time position is developed, or an existing full-time position becomes vacant, the Board of Directors or Senior Staff Team may define or redefine the role in a written job description. Positions may be filled through internal and/or external recruitment. The Board or Senior Staff Team may decide not to review or interview outside applicants for jobs based on certain criteria and circumstances. When external recruitment is desired, announcements may be sent to a wide range of sources.

### **Limited-term Staff, Interns, Trainees, Volunteers, and Fellowships**

Temporary, internship, trainee, work-study, volunteer, and fellowship positions can be established and filled by the Senior Staff Team. It is not necessary that these positions be advertised publicly or that a resume review process is conducted. None of the positions in this category are considered regular employees.

### **Selection of Personnel**

The Board of Directors or Senior Staff Team will review resumes and select qualified candidates for interviews. Rooted promotes internal advancement and will give current qualified staff who apply equal consideration with outside applicants. Reference and background checks may be conducted for all finalist candidates. Falsification of information found in a potential candidate's documents or statements could eliminate the candidate from further consideration. Falsification of information of documents or statements found after a hiring is grounds for immediate dismissal.

### **Employment Offers**

The Senior Staff Team (or President of the Board for a new Executive Director appointment) will develop a letter confirming the appointment and outlining any specific terms and/or conditions of employment at the time of hire.

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## **1.5 COMPENSATION**

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Persons employed by Rooted in salaried, exempt positions will receive a salary negotiated at the time of recruitment (to be reviewed annually thereafter). Compensation for part-time salaried employees will be set at an appropriate rate.

In the sole discretion of Rooted, and if funds are available, individual salaries may be adjusted. The Senior Staff Team may review each employee's salary for adjustment on a periodic basis. The Board of Directors will determine the Executive Director's salary annually.

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## **1.6 ORIENTATION**

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Unless otherwise specified, a new employee will serve a six-month orientation and training period ("Orientation Period"), which may be extended by Rooted. During this time, you have your first opportunity to evaluate our organization as a place to work, and we will have the first opportunity to evaluate you as an employee and coworker. This period involves periodic evaluations of performance. Upon successful completion of this period, you will assume **regular employee** status, though this will not affect your at-will employment status and does not guarantee continued employment during or after the Orientation Period. All employees, regardless of classification, status, or length of service, are expected to continually meet and maintain the organization's standards for job performance and professional behavior at all times. Employees who resign or are terminated during the orientation period are not entitled to any paid time off or leave benefits that may have accrued during that time.

It is the responsibility of the Senior Staff Team to ensure new employees are oriented to Rooted. The orientation will include, but is not limited to:

- an introduction to the organization's mission and goals
- a discussion of organizational structure and introduction to co-workers with brief explanation of their responsibilities
- a review of project and program information
- a review of policies, administrative procedures, this employee handbook, and other documents given to all new hires
- a review of benefits and signing of all necessary forms
- a discussion of the employees' responsibilities and organizational expectations
- a tour of the sites where Rooted's physical programs take place
- getting the employee started on assignments
- developing a check-in schedule for employee, relevant coworkers, and supervisor

The Senior Staff Team and/or the Executive Committee will work with the employee, and, as appropriate, other staff to develop performance expectations for each staff member and make sure these expectations are communicated to the employee.

Employees will be reviewed at the conclusion of their orientation period, and thereafter on an annual basis (See "Performance Appraisal Process").

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## **1.7 PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL PROCESS**

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All employees will receive performance appraisals annually. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors will conduct the performance evaluation of the Executive Director. The Executive Director and a member of the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors will conduct the performance evaluations of the Deputy Directors. Senior Staff Team will evaluate program directors and administrative staff. Program directors will evaluate program staff. The Senior Staff Team has the discretion to evaluate or discipline any employee and/or to end the employment relationship any time during the course of employment.

The Senior Staff Team or Program Director, at the conclusion of the orientation period, shall conduct an initial employee appraisal review. This review shall include overall job expectations and performance, employee and supervisor goals, and specific suggestions for improvement. Thereafter, the Senior Staff Team or Program Director shall schedule an annual performance appraisal for each employee.

In addition to the formal annual performance review, informal reviews may be conducted at any time in order to clarify responsibilities and performance standards, help employees set and check progress on goals, or recognize



exceptional work. The Senior Staff Team or Program Director may schedule informal reviews with employees at their discretion. The Executive Director and a board member may schedule informal reviews with a Deputy Director at their discretion. The Executive Committee of the Board of Directors may do the same for the Executive Director.

The Senior Staff Team and/or the Program Director will work with the employee and, as appropriate, other staff to develop performance expectations for each staff member and make sure these expectations are communicated to the employee. The objectives of a performance review are:

- 1) to determine the employee's eligibility for a change in duties, status, or pay;
- 2) to provide the basis for determining job training needs;
- 3) to give employees an evaluation of their performance and assist them in improving their performance; and
- 4) to inform the Supervisor of any questions or concerns an employee may have about their work.

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## **1.8 WORK SCHEDULE**

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Rooted may, in its sole discretion, provide a flexible schedule for exempt employees. Rooted recognizes that some of the work performed by exempt employees requires them to be working or traveling on weekends or during the evening, requiring more than 40 hours work in a work week from time to time. In such circumstances, with the approval of their direct supervisor, employees may alter their regular schedules and reduce the number of hours worked during the normal work week provided the employee can meet and maintain standards for their job performance. This reduction in the number of hours worked is not always guaranteed. Nevertheless, there may be occasions when the Senior Staff Team or the Board of Directors will require exempt employees to be at work at certain times. All schedules are subject to approval by the Senior Staff Team. Note: Exempt employees are not eligible for overtime pay. Rooted requires each employee to keep a record of hours worked. The Deputy Director of Operations approves the records of all hourly employees at the end of each pay period.

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## **1.9 HOLIDAY TIME**

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There will be 10 paid holidays per year for regular, full-time employees, for a total of 80 hours. Regular part-time employees, who work at least 20 hours per week but fewer than 40 hours per week, receive holiday time in proportion to the usual hours worked. Paid holidays may be requested of the employee's Supervisor at any time after the orientation period at the discretion of the employee, with

respect for job deadlines and responsibilities, and subject to the prior approval of the Senior Staff Team or the employee's Supervisor.

Part-time employees who work fewer than 20 hours per week are not compensated for holidays.

Holidays are not accrued from one year to the next and there is no compensation for unused holidays upon an employee's resignation or immediate termination.

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## **1.10 PAID TIME OFF**

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Rooted provides regular full-time and part-time (20 hours/week or more) employees with Paid Time Off (PTO), which is paid time away from work that can be used for vacation, personal time, personal illness, bereavement leave, or time off to care for dependents. The amount of PTO granted each year depends upon length of service and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) hours of work.

Although PTO is credited at the beginning of the calendar year (January 1st), it is earned over the course of the year and used after approval by the employee's Supervisor.

### **Availability, Use, and Scheduling of PTO Time**

1. New credits of PTO are available on January 1st of the new calendar year.
2. Whenever possible, PTO is to be requested in advance in writing for time off for vacations, personal leave appointments or other reasons, by agreement between the employee and his/her/their Supervisor.
3. Approval of PTO leave is subject to approval, agency staffing needs, and established procedures. Final approval will rest with the employee's Supervisor.
4. Employees may take PTO time in any increment of thirty (30) minutes.
5. Employees who work in limited-term positions, part-time positions under 20 hours per week, or contract positions will not be eligible to accrue paid leave.
6. Employees are responsible for ensuring that there is sufficient accrued leave to cover their requested period of leave with pay. PTO may not exceed a banked balance of accrued time.
7. See Section 1.6 Orientation and Section 1.13 Employment Separation, which describe Rooted's policy of not compensating departing employees for unused PTO of any kind.

### **Newly Hired Employees**

Accrued leave is credited on the first day of each calendar year (January 1st), but it is earned over the course of the year. Newly hired employees eligible for leave

accrual will be credited prorated hours based on full-time equivalent (FTE) and month of hire.

Month Hired	PTO (Hours)	PTO (Days)	Month Hired	PTO (Hours)	PTO (Days)
January	240.00	30.00	July	100.00	12.50
February	183.33	22.92	August	83.33	10.42
March	166.67	20.83	September	66.67	8.33
April	150.00	18.75	October	50.00	6.25
May	133.33	16.67	November	33.33	4.17
June	116.67	14.58	December	16.67	2.08

*Example:* A half-time (.5 FTE) employee starting employment in September will have 33.34 hours of PTO banked as of their date of hire (66.67 hours x .5 = 33.34 hours). A full-time (1.0 FTE) employee starting in September will have 66.67 hours banked as of their date of hire.

### Annual Accrual and Carryover of PTO

Employees in regular positions who work at least 20 hours per week will be eligible to accrue PTO, which is prorated by the full-time equivalent (FTE) and the number of years of continuous regular employment, as they occur.

Completed Years of Service	PTO (Hours)	PTO (Days)	Carryover Allowed (Hours)	Carryover Allowed (Days)
0 – 5 years	240	30	120	15
6+ years	280	35	160	20

#### *Examples:*

- A half-time (.5 FTE) employee with four years of service will bank 120 hours of PTO on January 1st. (240 hours x .5 FTE = 120 hours). They would be also eligible to add up to 60 hours of carryover (120 hours carryover x .5FTE), if available from the previous year.
- A full-time employee with 8 years of service will bank 280 hours of PTO every January 1st (280 hours x 1.0 FTE = 280 hours). They would also be eligible to add up to 160 hours of carryover, if available from the previous year.

The maximum amount that can be carried over from one calendar year to the next is prorated by the full-time equivalent (FTE) and the number of years of continuous regular employment, as they occur (see table above). Employees with a leave balance in excess of the allowable carryover of leave must use or lose the excess leave hours except when extenuating circumstances prohibit use of leave, as determined by the Senior Staff Team. Payment for earned but unused PTO time at the end of a calendar year is not permitted. PTO will not be

accrued during periods of leave without pay or leaves of absence, but previously accrued PTO will be available to employees upon return after said leave.

### **PTO Donation**

To assist a colleague with medical leave or bereavement leave, accrued leave may be transferred by one employee to another employee by written authorization from the employee transferring such leave. The transfer of accrued leave will be limited to one transfer per employee per calendar year, totaling a maximum of 40 hours, unless otherwise approved by the Senior Staff Team.

Employees who have tendered their resignation or otherwise have their employment terminated cannot transfer leave to other employees.

**Court Leave** will be granted to an employee who serves on jury duty or who is subpoenaed by a court to serve as a witness. An employee must present a court notice to their supervisor to be excused. Employees on court leave receive the same wages they would have earned while working during the time required by the court. The amount the court has paid for jury service will be deducted from employee wages. As the court schedule permits, the employee is expected to report to work or fulfill work responsibilities.

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## **1.11 LEAVES OF ABSENCE**

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A leave of absence is time off the job that is outside the definition and time periods of holidays, vacation, or personal leave policies. Leaves of absence are unpaid. Rooted may grant leaves of absence, in its sole discretion, for the following situations:

A **Temporary Leave** of absence of one month or less may be granted at the sole discretion of the Senior Staff Team to an employee in cases where a short period of time away from the job would be in the best interests of the employee and Rooted as determined by the Senior Staff Team. A Temporary Leave of absence may also be granted as Bereavement Leave.

Any accrued sick or vacation leave may be substituted for all or part of any uncompensated Temporary Leave or Bereavement Leave.

**Family Leave** will be established on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Senior Staff Team and will be based on performance and length of service to Rooted. Family Leave is uncompensated and shall not exceed 14 weeks. Family Leave is defined as time taken away from work in the case of the birth or adoption of a child, an extended illness of the staff member, or to provide extended care to an immediate family member with a serious health condition. Immediate family members include legal spouse, domestic partner, children and stepchildren, mother, father, brother, sister, mother-in-law, father-in-law, and grandparent.

Any accrued sick or vacation leave may be substituted for all or part of any uncompensated Family Leave.

Since Rooted is a small office, approval of Family Leave may be contingent upon the ability of remaining staff and other short-term temporary workers being able to maintain the employee's current workload and meet determined deadlines.

A written statement about the terms and timetable for the Family Leave will result from the discussions with the Senior Staff Team and/or the Executive Committee and arrangements made with short-term workers. At the end of the first month of Family Leave the employee will agree to give, in writing, a firm commitment to return to their job for Rooted.

A **Special Leave** of absence without pay for other purposes may be granted to an employee at the discretion of the Senior Staff Team. Special leaves will not begin until all available leave has been taken. A special leave will be granted only for a definite period of time.

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## 1.12 BENEFITS

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### **MANDATORY BENEFITS** (benefits required by Law)

Rooted complies with all mandatory insurance (including Unemployment Insurance and Worker's Compensation) and all necessary employer payroll withholding taxes and funds in compliance with the Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA).

### **VOLUNTARY BENEFITS**

#### **Medical and Dental Insurance**

Rooted provides Medical and Dental Insurance to full-time employees and employees working 20 hours per week or more.

Employees that work at least 20 hours per week may enroll in Rooted's health and dental insurance plans upon hire. Rooted will pay a percentage of the cost of the plan, and employees will pay a percentage of the plan. The percentage is determined by the employee's full-time equivalent (FTE), full time being 40 hours per week.

Rooted will cover the cost of an individual insurance plan at 10% less than the employee's FTE. For example, if an employee is at 100% FTE or 40 hours per week, Rooted will pay 90% of the cost of the plan. If an employee works at 50% FTE or 20 hours per week, Rooted will pay 40% of the cost of the plan.

As a small organization, Rooted cannot currently cover this percentage of the cost of family plans (which run over three times as much as individual plans) or

individual plus one plans. Rooted will cover the cost of an individual +1 or a family plan at 20% more than the total it covers for an individual plan.

*Example:* If the portion that Rooted covers for an individual plan of a full-time employee is \$100, Rooted will cover \$120 of the cost of a family plan.)

Rooted family and individual-plus-one plans include domestic partnerships.

## **Retirement**

Rooted offers all employees the opportunity to contribute to a 401(k) plan. Employees who work at least 20 hours per week on average will be eligible for a 1% employer match the quarter following their one-year anniversary date. This match is subject to change on an annual basis. Plan details are provided to each eligible employee.

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## **1.13 EMPLOYMENT SEPARATION**

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Per the at-will employment relationship, either party may end the employment relationship at any time for any reason or no reason at all, with or without prior notice.

No employee will be compensated for any accrued but unused Paid Time Off or accrued but unused Holiday Time Off at the time of separation, whether that separation is voluntary or at the employer's discretion.

Upon either party's decision to terminate the employment relationship, an exit interview will be conducted between the employee leaving and his/her/their supervisor and the Senior Staff Team to determine the separation process and assist both the employee and the organization in the transition.

### **Voluntary Resignation**

An employee may resign voluntarily at any time, for any reason or no reason at all, with or without prior notice. Rooted requests the courtesy of two weeks' advance notice from the employee.

### **Termination by Employer**

Rooted will make efforts to provide the employee advance notice of termination due to budgetary elimination of a position or poor employee performance, however, employees are subject to immediate termination if required in Rooted's sole discretion.

### **Work Products and Files**

All Rooted equipment, supplies, materials, files, and work products of any Rooted employee, will remain the property of Rooted after resignation, discharge, or

layoff of any employee. All written work, databases, logos, design, artwork, and computer programming associated with work accomplished during employment remain the property of Rooted. Rooted reserves the right to copyright, trademark, or service mark such work without explicit permission from an employee or former employee. Work files, whether electronic or hard copy, and other papers and equipment will remain the property of Rooted and must be returned at the time of separation.

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## **1.14 GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

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All employees may file grievances concerning any action affecting their status or conditions of employment, including termination, discrimination, or abusive behavior by a supervisor or other employee. Grievances are handled in the following manner.

1. The employee with a grievance should first attempt to resolve the matter with the other employee involved.
2. If the employee is still dissatisfied, they should notify the Senior Staff Team in writing, stating the specific complaint or grievance, including all pertinent facts in the case.
3. The Senior Staff Team will investigate the complaint or grievance and respond to a complaint or grievance in writing within thirty days. The Senior Staff Team's decision is final.
4. When a grievance involves the conduct of the Executive Director, the employee may appeal to the Executive Committee of the Board of Directors. Such appeal must be in writing, setting forth specific areas of grievances. The Executive Committee will review the grievance expeditiously and issue a final decision resolving the grievance. The Executive Committee, at its discretion, or its appointee, may meet with the individual regarding the grievance and/or conduct an inquiry into the grievance, as it deems appropriate.

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## **1.15 NON-HARASSMENT POLICY**

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Rooted is committed to providing a work environment free of unlawful harassment and discrimination. This policy prohibits sexual harassment and discrimination based on sex, race, religion, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, age, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law or ordinance or regulation. This policy applies to all persons working in the operation of the organization, i.e., employees, interns, volunteers, Board Members, etc.

## **Sexual and Other Forms of Harassment**

Rooted is committed to providing an environment free from sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct or communication constituting sexual harassment. Sexual harassment of a Rooted employee by another employee, volunteer, contractor, member of the Board of Directors, or any other individual officially connected to the organization is prohibited.

Sexual harassment refers to behavior of a sexual nature that is unwelcome and personally offensive to its recipients. Sexual harassment is a form of employee misconduct that is demeaning to another person and undermines the integrity of the employment relationship.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature is “sexual harassment” when:

- submission of such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a condition of an individual’s employment;
- submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the employee; or
- the harassment has a purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an employee’s work performance, or creating an environment that is intimidating, hostile, or offensive to the employee.

For example, unwanted physical contact, foul language, sexually oriented propositions, jokes or remarks, obscene gestures, or the display of sexually explicit pictures, cartoons, or other materials may be considered offensive to another employee, and thus should not occur.

Any employee who feels that they have been sexually harassed should immediately report the matter to the Senior Staff Team. In the case of the Executive Director or a member of the Board of Directors, report sexual harassment matters to the Executive Committee or other board member. All reported matters will be investigated, and remedial action will be taken when warranted. To the extent possible, strict confidentiality will be maintained.

Any retaliation of those who file good faith complaints under this policy will not be tolerated. Violators of this policy will be subject to discipline, including discharge.

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### **1.16 TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS**

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For reasons of safety, public relations, and other concerns, use of tobacco in the workplace is forbidden. Rooted employees shall refrain from smoking or chewing tobacco during work periods, meetings, or fieldwork. If Rooted employees must



smoke or chew tobacco, it should be done only during breaks in designated or appropriate outdoor areas.

Employees are prohibited from using, selling, dispensing, distributing, possessing, or manufacturing illegal drugs and narcotics or alcoholic beverages on Rooted premises or work sites, unless alcoholic beverages are served as part of an approved Rooted function or event.

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## **1.17 PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

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As a Rooted employee, you are expected to comply with all applicable laws and with the highest ethical standards. No employees should have outside interests that could conflict with their primary duties to Rooted in the conduct of its business and/or the interests of Rooted. Employees must avoid the use of information or procedures that may involve an actual or apparent conflict of interest between Rooted responsibilities and outside connections. You may not, as a Rooted employee, use your position to profit personally or to benefit the professional or financial interests of any other organization or individual at the expense of Rooted.

Employees are required to inform the Senior Staff Team of any proprietary or financial interest they have in a company or organization with which Rooted does business. Employees must report to the Senior Staff Team if they hold other jobs or positions with a company or organization, and further disclose if these other hiring entities do business with Rooted. All employees must prioritize their commitment to Rooted when considering outside work. Rooted should know if employees are working for others generally and requests that the employee disclose other employment at the time of hire by Rooted or by another company or organization. The Senior Staff Team, in their sole discretion, will determine if a conflict of interest or commitment exists.

Employees shall not accept gifts from any person or firm doing or seeking to do business with Rooted under circumstances where it could be reasonably inferred that the purpose of the gift is to influence the employee's decisions in conducting Rooted's business in favor of the donor. Employees shall not attempt to influence, directly or indirectly, the internal operations and decision-making process of the Board of Directors.

Employees must avoid an actual or apparent conflict of interest.

No employee may formally represent Rooted as a spokesperson unless specifically authorized to do so in writing by the Senior Staff Team.

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## **1.18 CONFIDENTIALITY OF INFORMATION**

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All Rooted materials, files, and records are the property of Rooted and are confidential. The above can include but is not limited to information concerning projects, budgets, clients, personnel and payroll records of present and former employees, and financial records of Rooted. Also included are computer security codes, vendor and supplier purchase records, pending or potential legal actions, and all other information pertaining to the business affairs or operating practices and procedures of Rooted. Rooted files and records will neither be copied nor disclosed to any party except as authorized by Rooted management. The confidentiality of Rooted property survives termination of employment.

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## **1.19 NON-DISPARAGEMENT POLICY**

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Nothing contained in this handbook shall be construed to restrict or interfere with the rights of employees to discuss or communicate regarding their wages, hours, and/or working conditions (“NLRB Section 7 Rights”), provided employees do not violate any law or the rights of any other person or entity.

Communication between Rooted and Rooted’s employees is a joint responsibility shared by the organization and you. Your opinions, suggestions, and questions are important to us. Feel free to talk about issues at work that concern you with the Senior Staff Team or your Program Director. Rooted will attempt to provide honest, straightforward responses to questions and comments. While Rooted is committed to an open dialogue with all employees, airing grievances in public forums can be damaging to the organization and its mission. As a result and in light of Rooted’s commitment to protect and honor employees’ NLRB Section 7 Rights, all employees are discouraged from making disparaging statements or speech in public forums with audiences well beyond other Rooted employees. This includes, but is not limited to, any statement or comment (written or oral or in any electronic format) that in any way disparages Rooted, its services, or any of its employees or the Board of Directors.

Violation of this policy may result in immediate termination. Further, breach of this non-disparagement policy may call for legal intervention because it could cause substantial and irreparable harm to Rooted for which money damages would be an inadequate remedy. Accordingly, Rooted shall in any such event be entitled to obtain injunctive and other forms of equitable relief to prevent such breach, in addition to any other rights or remedies available at law, in equity or by statute.

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## 1.20 WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY

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### **General**

Employees, officers, directors, and committee members of Rooted are expected to conduct business in a lawful, ethical, and professional manner (“Expectations of Conduct”). This policy identifies procedures to be followed when there is a violation or suspected violation of those Expectations of Conduct.

### **Reporting Responsibility**

It is the responsibility of all employees, directors, officers and committee members to report violations or suspected violations of the Expectations of Conduct in accordance with this Whistleblower Policy.

### **No Retaliation**

No employee, director, officer, or committee member who in good faith reports a violation of the Expectations of Conduct shall suffer harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequences. An employee who retaliates against someone who has reported a violation in good faith is subject to discipline up to and including immediate termination of employment. This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable employees, officers, directors, and committee members to raise serious concerns within Rooted prior to seeking resolution outside Rooted.

### **Reporting Violations**

Employees, directors, officers, or committee members who believe that an Expectation of Conduct has been violated are encouraged to share their questions, concerns, suggestions or complaints with someone who can address them properly. In most cases, the Senior Staff Team or the Board President will be in the best position to address an area of concern. However, if the person reporting the violation or suspected violation is not comfortable speaking with the Senior Staff Team or the Board President or is not satisfied with the Senior Staff Team’s or Board President’s response, such person is encouraged to speak with any Rooted Board Director or Finance Committee member whom they are comfortable in approaching. The person receiving such a report shall advise one or more of the following: the Senior Staff Team, the Board President, and/or the Chair of the Finance Committee. The Senior Staff Team and the Board President shall report to the Finance Committee at least annually on compliance activity.

### **Accounting and Auditing Matters**

The Finance Committee shall address all reported concerns or complaints regarding corporate accounting practices, internal controls, or auditing. The Chair of the Finance Committee shall immediately notify the Finance Committee of any such complaint and work with the committee until the matter is resolved.

### **Acting in Good Faith**

Anyone filing a complaint concerning a violation or suspected violation of the Expectations of Conduct must be acting in good faith and have reasonable grounds for believing the information disclosed indicates a violation of the Expectations of Conduct. Any allegations that prove not to be substantiated and which prove to have been made maliciously or knowingly to be false will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense.

### **Confidentiality**

Violations or suspected violations may be submitted on a confidential basis by the complainant or may be submitted anonymously. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation.

### **Handling of Reported Violations**

The Senior Staff Team, Board President, or Finance Committee Chair shall notify the person reporting the violation or suspected violation and acknowledge receipt of the reported violation or suspected violation within five business days. All reports shall be promptly investigated, and appropriate corrective action taken if warranted by the investigation.

## **SECTION 2: OPERATING PROCEDURES**

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### **2.1 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

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All Rooted employees are expected to be civil and treat people with respect and dignity. Employees are expected to share the basic philosophy of Rooted and to support its mission. Employees are expected to approach their work with a positive attitude and be team players. Where there are problems, employees are expected to be part of the solution. Every employee is expected to represent Rooted accurately and to avoid sharing confidential Rooted information. Additional policies and employee responsibilities are described below.

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### **2.2 EMPLOYEE BEHAVIOR**

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Certain rules and regulations regarding employee behavior are necessary for the efficient operation of Rooted and for the benefit and safety of all employees. Conduct that interferes with operations, discredits Rooted, or is offensive to members, visitors, or fellow employees will not be tolerated.

1. When at work, Rooted Employees are expected at all times to conduct themselves in a positive manner so as to promote the best interests of Rooted and respect the rights of their fellow employees. Such conduct includes:
  - a. Reporting to work punctually, as scheduled, and being at the proper workstation, ready for work, at the employee's stated starting time;
  - b. Giving proper advance notice whenever unable to work or report on time;
  - c. Complying with all Rooted safety and security regulations;
  - d. Maintaining workplace and work area cleanliness and orderliness;
  - e. Treating all members, visitors, and fellow employees in a courteous manner;
  - f. Refraining from behavior or conduct deemed offensive, undesirable, or contrary to Rooted's best interests;
  - g. Performing assigned tasks diligently, efficiently, and expeditiously;
  - h. Limiting personal cellular phone use in the office to emergency calls or Rooted business unless calls are made on personal time.
  - i. [Maintaining adequate attendance records.](#)
2. The following conduct is prohibited and will subject the individual involved to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination:
  - a. Reporting to work under the influence of alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs or narcotics; use, sale, dispensing, or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, or narcotics on Rooted's premises (this does not apply if alcoholic beverages are served as part of an approved Rooted function or event);
  - b. Use of profanity or abusive, demeaning, or insulting language;
  - c. Insubordination, including refusal or failure to follow a supervisor's instructions concerning a job-related matter;
  - d. Fighting with or assault on a fellow employee, member, or visitor;
  - e. Theft, destruction, defacement, or misuse of Rooted's or another employee's property;
  - f. Gambling on Rooted's property or during working time;
  - g. Falsification or alteration of any Rooted record or report, including, but not limited to, applications for employment, medical reports, time records, or expense reports;
  - h. Threatening or intimidating co-workers, members, or visitors;
  - i. Smoking or chewing tobacco where prohibited by local ordinance or Rooted's rules;
  - j. Violating Rooted's non-harassment policy;

- k. Improper disclosure of confidential information.
- l. Breach of the Professional Standards and Conflict of Interest Policy

The examples just cited are illustrative of the type of behavior that will not be permitted but are not intended to be an all-inclusive listing. Further, as employees at will, employment of Rooted personnel may be terminated at any time, with or without cause or notice. Rooted is not required to go through any specific disciplinary steps prior to immediate termination. Any questions in connection with this policy should be directed to the Senior Staff Team.

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## **2.3 FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT, AND VEHICLES**

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In order to safeguard its assets and to provide a safe working environment, Rooted employees must responsibly care for company facilities, equipment, and vehicles. Employees should act reasonably to protect company property from theft or damage. All employees should immediately report unsafe conditions, equipment, or vehicles to the appropriate staff. Employees who operate Rooted equipment or vehicles must do so safely.

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## **2.4 PERSONAL APPEARANCE**

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Rooted employees should dress appropriately for their job. This may differ from person-to-person, depending on the employee's position, roles, and responsibilities at Rooted. Some jobs may require staff to be outside working in gardens or farm fields. Staff working such jobs are expected to dress for comfort and practicality, including adequate sun protection. Clothing should adhere to Wisconsin's Indecent Exposure laws and Rooted's employee behavior standards and should not include images or language that is sexually explicit or offensive, including but not limited to hate language and appropriative images. Rooted recognizes the need for comfort and the expression of individuality among employees. At no time should any Rooted employee change their clothing in front of coworkers.

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## **2.5 TRAVEL POLICY**

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Rooted will pay for reasonable expenses related to business travel. Rooted will reimburse for actual expenses incurred during the course of Rooted business in accordance with a written schedule of reimbursement, provided that appropriate records and receipts are submitted within 60 days after the expense has been incurred. The most reasonable rate of travel will be utilized and Rooted may place limits on travel expenses to ensure economy of travel. In cases where the

employee is driving their own car and travel reimbursement funds are available, the applicable IRS mileage rate will be used. The Senior Staff Team must pre-approve all travel outside of the Madison area. Reimbursement for incidental expenses incurred in the employee's local working area requires the advance approval of the Senior Staff Team or their designee.

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## **2.6 FIREARMS AND WEAPONS BAN**

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In order to ensure a safe environment for employees and visitors, Rooted prohibits the wearing, transporting, storage, or presence of firearms or other weapons in our facilities or on our property to the fullest extent permitted by law. Any employee in possession of a firearm or other weapons while on/in our facilities/property, Rooted vehicles, or while otherwise fulfilling job responsibilities away from Rooted facilities/property may face disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination. Possession of a valid concealed weapons permit authorized by the State of Wisconsin or any other governmental agency (local, state, or federal) is not an exemption under this policy except where Wis Stat 175.60(15m)(b) provides otherwise.

While Rooted respects and values all individuals' rights under local, state and federal laws, our policy is not to allow any individual to carry firearms of any kind in or around our buildings or property unless they are uniformed or identified law enforcement officers or a licensed individual safely transporting a weapon in their own motor vehicle. We believe this policy is in the best interests of all our visitors and employees, regardless of their personal beliefs.

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## **2.7 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

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Rooted is committed to preventing workplace violence and to maintaining a safe work environment. We have adopted the following guidelines to deal with intimidation, harassment, or other threats of (or actual) violence that might occur during business hours or on our premises.

All employees, including supervisors and temporary employees, should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from fighting, "horseplay," or other conduct that may be dangerous to others.

Rooted will not tolerate conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee, a customer, or a member of the public at any time, including off-duty periods. This includes all acts of harassment, per the Anti-Harassment Policy (earlier in this Handbook).

All threats of (or actual) violence, either direct or indirect, should be reported as soon as possible to your supervisor or any other member of management. This includes threats by employees as well as threats by customers, vendors,

solicitors, or anyone else. When reporting a threat of violence, you should be as specific and detailed as possible.

Be sure to report any suspicious person or activities as soon as possible to a supervisor. Do not place yourself in peril. If you see or hear a commotion or disturbance near your work area, do not try to intercede or see what is happening.

We will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats of (or actual) violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the person who made the report will be protected to the extent practical. To maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, Rooted may suspend an employee, either with or without pay, pending investigation.

Any person who violates these guidelines will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment. Violations include making a threat of violence or actually committing a violent act.

If you are having a dispute or differences with another employee, we encourage you to discuss it with your supervisor or the Senior Staff Team before the situation escalates into potential violence. Rooted is eager to assist in the resolution of employee disputes.

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## **2.8 INTERNET, COMPUTER, AND EMAIL USAGE, AND SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY**

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### **Internet Usage**

Internet access and computing resources are provided by Rooted to assist employees in work-related communications and obtaining work-related electronic information. The following guidelines have been established to help ensure responsible and productive internet usage. Employees are expected to use the internet primarily for job-related activities. Internet usage for non job-related purposes must be limited to before or after work hours, must comply with acceptable conditions stated below, and must not compromise the integrity of the computer system.

All internet data that is composed, transmitted, or received via Rooted computer communications systems is considered to be part of the official records of Rooted and, as such, is subject to disclosure to law enforcement or other third parties. Consequently, employees should always ensure that the business information contained in Internet e-mail messages and other transmissions is accurate, appropriate, ethical, lawful, and business related.

The equipment, services, and technology provided to access the Internet remain at all times the property of Rooted. As such, Rooted reserves the right to monitor internet traffic, and retrieve and read any data composed, sent, or received through our online connections and stored in our computer systems. Employees



should have no expectation of privacy with respect to their computer use on Rooted equipment or internet connection. A Rooted email address should not be used for personal correspondence, as the account and its contents are the property of the organization. Similarly, Rooted employees should not conduct organization business from their personal email accounts.

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

Examples of unacceptable content may include, but are not limited to, sexual comments or images, racial slurs, gender-specific comments, or any other comments or images that could reasonably offend someone on the basis of race, age, sex, religious or political beliefs, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by law.

Abuse of the internet access provided by Rooted in violation of law or Rooted policies will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment. Employees may also be held personally liable for any violations of this policy.

## **Computer and Email Usage**

Computers, computer files, the email system, and software furnished to employees are Rooted property intended for business use only. Employees should not use a password, access a file, or retrieve any stored communication without authorization. To ensure compliance with this policy, computer and e-mail usage may be monitored.

Rooted strives to maintain a workplace free of harassment and sensitive to the diversity of its employees. Therefore, Rooted prohibits the use of computers and the email system in ways that are disruptive, offensive to others, or harmful to morale.

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

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

Employees should notify the Senior Staff Team upon learning of violations of this policy. Employees who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate termination of employment.

## **Social Media Policy**

Rooted recognizes that the use of social media (including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, blogs, etc.) can present legitimate marketing uses and professional networking opportunities for Rooted employees. As a result, Rooted does not prohibit the use of social media. We ask that you use the same common sense and careful thinking you would use in any other business communication when using social media. If you are using any form of social media for a workplace purpose we ask that you present yourself and Rooted in an accurate and professional context. Also keep in mind that Rooted diligently protects the confidential information of our volunteers, donors, employees, and board members.

If you are using social media for entertainment or personal communication during work hours, please limit this use to break periods. Keep in mind that the use of social media and the internet in general, can give a false sense of anonymity. You are responsible for all of your communications on social media and the internet. All of the Rooted policies in this handbook, including but not limited to, protecting confidential information, protecting Rooted employees from harassment, and non-disparagement of Rooted apply to your use of social media and the internet.

Rooted reserves the right to inspect any past communication on Rooted issued equipment and there should be no expectation of privacy when using Rooted equipment. Violating any Rooted policy by using social media will result in the same disciplinary actions as any violation using other forms of communication. Nothing contained in this handbook shall be construed to restrict or interfere with the rights of employees to discuss or communicate regarding their wages, hours, and/or working conditions, provided employees do not violate any law or the rights of any other person or entity.

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## **2.9 OTHER POLICIES**

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Employees are responsible for becoming informed of all Rooted policies, whether or not included in this Handbook. Of course, not every event, action, or situation may be covered by a specific policy, and Rooted, at all times, retains the right to take any action it deems in the best interest of the organization.

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## **2.10 CHANGES TO THIS MANUAL**

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Changes may be proposed at any time by Board or staff of Rooted.

All changes must be submitted to the Senior Staff Team. The Senior Staff Team must post changes to all board and staff for a 30-day comment period. At the close of the comment period the Board of Directors will vote on the changes for

approval. All approved changes to the handbook must be published to the staff in an update memo to be attached to the handbook.

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## EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK SIGNATURE RECEIPT

I have received my copy of the Rooted Employee Handbook. I understand and agree that it is my responsibility to read, familiarize myself with, and follow the policies and procedures contained in the handbook.

I agree to follow the confidentiality guidelines as stated in the “Confidentiality of Information” section of this handbook.

I have read and understand my rights and responsibilities to report any violations of the Anti-Harassment Policy listed in this handbook.

I understand that any and all policies or practices can be changed at any time by Rooted according to the “Changes to this Manual” policy contained herein.

I understand and agree that nothing in the Employee Handbook creates or is intended to create a promise or representation of continued employment and that employment with Rooted is employment at-will; employment may be terminated at the will of either Rooted or me. My signature below certifies that I understand that the foregoing agreement on at-will status is the sole and entire agreement between Rooted and me concerning the duration of my employment and the circumstances under which my employment may be terminated.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date