

# COUNTY OF JACKSON POLICY MANUAL

**Personnel**

**Policy 3410**

## Jackson County Non-Retaliation Policy

This policy applies to all Jackson County employees, members of the board, agents, consultants, contract labor, and others when they are representing or acting for, or on behalf of, Jackson County.

### **I. Mission Statement**

Jackson County is committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of harassment, intimidation, discrimination and retaliation for engaging in protected activity such as reporting violations or participating in an investigation pertaining to alleged violations of laws, policies, or procedures. Crucial to these objectives is promoting an atmosphere where employees and others feel safe to engage in frank, honest communication – raising questions or concerns at any time without fear of retaliation.

### **II. Non-Retaliation Policy**

Jackson County strictly prohibits any form of retaliatory action against employees who raise issues or ask questions, make reports, participate in an investigation, refuse to participate in suspected improper or wrongful activity, or exercise workplace rights protected by law (in each case “Protected Activity”). Situations or behaviors that could lead to an employee engaging in a Protected Activity include, but are not limited to reporting the following:

- A. Discrimination or harassment;
- B. Fraud;
- C. Unethical or unprofessional business conduct;
- D. Non-compliance with Jackson County policies/procedures, Jackson County Union and Non-Union Employee Handbooks policies/procedures, including the Code of Conduct;
- E. Real or potential threats to Jackson County employees or the public’s health and/or safety;
- F. Violations of local, state or federal laws and regulations;
- G. Other illegal or improper practices or policies.

### III. Protection from retaliation

Any Jackson County employee who engages in Protected Activity will be shielded from retaliation. Retaliation occurs when an employer takes an Adverse Action against an employee because they engaged in a Protected Activity.

Jackson County prohibits retaliation even if the concerns raised are not confirmed following an investigation. However, an employee may be subject to Adverse Action and/or discipline if the employee knowingly made a false allegation, provided false or misleading information in the course of an investigation, or otherwise acted in bad faith.

**This non-retaliation policy does not exempt employees from the consequences of their own misconduct or inadequate performance, and self-reporting such issues is not Protected Activity.** The policy also does not prevent Jackson County from managing employee performance and addressing conduct issues after an employee has engaged in Protected Activity, so long as Protected Activity is not the reason for the performance management.

### IV. Obligation to Raise Concerns

Jackson County depends on its employees to raise questions or concerns so that the County can take appropriate action. All employees are required to report any suspicion of improper or wrongful activity to their Supervisor, Department Head, Elected Official, Human Resources or the County Administrator/Controller. Supervisors and Department Heads must submit all reports from employees to Human Resources and/or the County Administrator/Controller.

Employees who believe they have either witnessed retaliation or been personally retaliated against or that any other violation of this policy has occurred, or who have questions concerning this policy, must immediately notify the Human Resources Department. Employees may also, where appropriate, contact appropriate governmental authorities. Jackson County takes all claims of retaliation very seriously and reports will be reviewed promptly and investigated.

### V. Consequences for Policy Violation

Any Jackson County employee who retaliates against an employee engaged in a Protected Activity or who otherwise violates this policy is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.