

# **LAWYERS ALERT ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY MANUAL**

## **1.1 Purpose**

The purpose of this Administrative Policy is to set down the conditions, rights and obligations of Lawyers Alert employees subject to their performing of duties and responsibilities in their respective job descriptions. From the time of hiring, each employee will have access to this policy, so that he/she can adhere to it strictly.

The policies may at any time be subject to modification if the Board of Lawyers Alert deems it necessary. In such cases, employees will be fully informed of the changes made.

## **1.2 Categories of Personnel**

Personnel working for Lawyers Alert are classified into the following types:

### **1.2.1 Employees**

These are salaried individuals who, after a probationary period, are given assignments, either part-time or full-time, and are paid on a monthly basis. They will be contracted on a long-term basis subject to periodic evaluations and performance assessments. They will have the responsibility for the day to day functioning in any one or more projects of the organization.

All the employees of the organization are classified into categories. These categories are outlined as follows:

1. Management Category:
  - a. President
2. Professional Category:
  - a. Program Manager
  - b. Human Resources Manager
  - c. Finance Director
  - d. Information, Education, Communication/Training Coordinator
3. Support Category:
  - a. Administrative Assistant
  - b. Driver
  - c. Cleaner

### **1.2.2 Consultants**

Consultants are professional experts hired by Lawyers Alert on a short-term basis only for the completion of specific tasks and assignments

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related to Lawyers Alert or one or more of its projects. Separate and limited contracts, defining their job description, timeline, deliverables, reporting procedures and payment details will be issued to consultants. They will be paid on daily/monthly/weekly basis depending upon the nature of their assignment. They will not be considered as full-time or part-time employees of the organization.

### **1.2.3 Volunteers**

Volunteers are individuals who work at Lawyers Alert of their own volition or who have been deployed to Lawyers Alert by other organizations. They will be assigned tasks from time to time as deemed necessary by Lawyers Alert. Lawyers Alert will have a limited contract with volunteers and will not provide any compensation except under special conditions. They will not be considered as full-time or part-time employees of the organization.

## **1.3 Personnel Recruitment**

Lawyers Alert believes in equal employment opportunities for each individual, regardless of race, colour, [gender](#), religion, age, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, [disability](#), marital status, veteran status, or any other occupationally irrelevant condition. This policy applies to recruitment and advertising; hiring and job assignment; promotion, demotion and transfer; layoff or termination; rates of pay and benefits; selection for training; and the provision of any other human resources service.

### **1.3.1 Notice of Vacant or New Position**

It is the responsibility of the Governing Board to fill vacant positions as well as new regular positions and new temporary positions of a duration exceeding more than six months. The Board must make sure that the positions can be filled under the organizational budget.

For all new positions, a job description shall be established and include the following elements:

- Position summary
- description of duties and responsibilities
- conditions of work
- qualifications

Notice of a new or vacant position must be approved by the Governing Board before it is released publicly.

Recruitment for a new or vacant position can be opened to internal and external competition. For external recruitment, positions in the

professional category can be advertised publicly through newspapers if they are regular positions, or if there is a limited tendering process for consultation.

### **1.3.2 Interview and selection**

As a general rule, a selection committee comprising of at least two members shall be assembled for filling all positions.

The committee will go through the applications received, retaining those that show the best qualifications. It will evaluate each candidate's application with the help of an evaluation form created beforehand, containing well-defined criteria.

A list of the candidates chosen to be interviewed will be shortlisted by the Selection Committee. The interviews will serve to make a final choice and also to establish a database of potential future candidates.

### **1.3.3 Appointment Letter**

Any personnel employed with Lawyers Alert will be issued an appointment letter prior to his/her employment by the organization. The appointment letter will officially announce his/her position within the organization, the place of assignment and the effective date of employment. The appointment letter will specify terms of reference, salary and benefits and other relevant terms of employment (Refer 1.4 Employment).

### **1.3.4 Probationary Period**

A probation period of three months shall apply to all new employees from the date of hire. Exceptionally, the probation period may be extended to six months. If a new employee fails to perform in accordance with expectations of Lawyers Alert staff/board, he/she will be given a notice, terminating the contract at the end of the probationary period.

### **1.3.5 Staff orientation**

All new employees will get an orientation about the organization's mission and strategies, its structure and the staff within it, the policies and conditions of employment, the internal rules and regulations, etc.

## **1.4 Remuneration**

Lawyers Alert believes in attracting and retaining a qualified and effective workforce through a system of payment that is both appealing and fair. All employees of Lawyers Alert are entitled to a basic salary, depending upon

their skills, qualification and experience. The basic salary will be mentioned in the appointment letter.

#### **1.4.1 Salary Increment**

Salary increment will be based upon an employee's position and performance. Increment will be provided to employees on annual basis after their performance evaluation. Salary increment is calculated on the basis of basic salary of the staff.

#### **1.5 Travel**

Staff may be asked to travel away from their usual workplaces on authorized missions. The policy on payment of travel allowances adopted by Lawyers Alert applies to all employees regardless of job category or status. It also applies to the consultants, when mentioned in their agreement.

After reimbursable expenses are made, the person making an expense claim shall use the appropriate forms available. The expenses will not be reimbursed if proper justifying documents (original receipts) are not attached except for per diem. Eligible expenses include:

##### **1.5.1 Per Diem**

All employees and volunteers are provided per diem will be dependent on locality being visited and will cover the cost of food for each night spent outside the city as approved by Lawyers Alert.

##### **1.5.2 Accommodation**

All employees and volunteers are entitled to claim expenses incurred for accommodation for official trips outside their primary place of work. Maximum claims for accommodation shall not exceed N20, 000. 00 (twenty thousand naira) only. Claims for accommodation will be reimbursed upon submission of bills/receipts.

##### **1.5.3 Mode of Transport**

Lawyers Alert will pay only surface transport as far as possible, i.e. bus or taxi. If any individual is using a personal vehicle for Lawyers Alert related work, they can be reimbursed the actual fuel cost based upon mileage. Some maintenance will also be awarded if required. However, the private transport must be shared by more than one Lawyers Alert member or employee.

#### **1.6 Leave and Holidays**

### **1.6.1 Leave**

All employees are entitled to the following leave with pay.

#### **(1) Annual Leave**

All employees of Lawyers Alert are entitled to 18 working days off as paid leave per year. This leave is accrued monthly at the rate of 1.5 working days.

#### **(2) Sick Leave**

Employees are entitled to 12 working days of sick leave with pay per calendar year. Sick leave is accumulated at the rate of 1 day for every full month worked. Employees have to present a medical certificate to substantiate claims for sick leave with pay for absences exceeding two successive days.

#### **(3) Maternity Leave**

All female employees are entitled to maternity leave of 120 (one hundred and twenty) calendar days as stipulated by Nigeria's national policy.

#### **(4) Paternity Leave**

Male employees are entitled to paternity leave of 11 (eleven) calendar days.

#### **(5) Mourning Leave**

In case of the death of a parent, child or spouse, employees will be given a mourning leave of 14 days each.

#### **(6) Compassionate Leave**

Emergency leave is granted to employees for any serious illness of a parent, child or spouse and/or personal emergencies. A total of 7 days per year can be allowed for compassionate leave.

### **1.7 Prohibition on Outside Employment and/or Engagement**

Full-time regular employees of Lawyers Alert are not allowed to undertake outside employment.

### **1.8 Termination of Employment**

#### **1.8.1 Conditions for Termination**

Employees shall lose their jobs under any of the following conditions:

## **(1) Voluntary Resignation**

- i. Personnel wishing to resign from post may do so by giving a resignation letter to the President stating the reasons for resignation and effective date of the same. One month of prior notice is required for such resignations.
- ii. The date in which the resignation letter is received at the Lawyers Alert office is considered the date on which notice of resignation is given. Failure to provide sufficient notice may be ground for forfeiture of all accrued employee benefits.

## **(2) Redundancy of the Position**

Depending on the nature and volume of its operation, Lawyers Alert may declare certain positions redundant. Persons occupying those positions will therefore be forced to be separated from Lawyers Alert with proper notice. While doing so, Lawyers Alert will give at least 2 months' notice in advance.

## **(3) Grounds for employee termination are the following:**

- i. Continuing inefficiency and gross negligence of duty.
- ii. Embezzlement.
- iii. Misuse of office equipment, and other properties.
- iv. Repeated unauthorized absences and leaves
- v. Intoxication while on official business or within office premises
- vi. Unauthorized disclosure of official information

## **(4) Retirement**

When an employee reaches the age of retirement, according to the country's law, the employment relationship comes to an end. Lawyers Alert shall notify the employee by letter, stating the date the employment terminates.

The retiring employee shall receive salary up to the date of departure and other allowances as specified in his/her agreement.

## **(5) Death**

When an employee dies, his/her salary and benefits will automatically be paid to his/her next of kin.

### **1.8.2 Procedures for Termination and/or Disciplinary Action**

- i. Lawyers Alert will ask the employee for a written explanation on the offense deemed committed by the employee concerned, identifying the charges against him/her and the particulars of the facts relied upon to support it.

- ii. The employee is given 3 working days to submit his/her explanations.
- iii. Based on the written explanations submitted by the employee concerned and the strength of evidence presented, Lawyers Alert may choose to decide on the charges or pursue further investigation of the case.
- iv. Lawyers Alert can, shall it feel necessary to, suspend the employee in question from duty during the period of investigation subject to the following conditions:
  - a. should the employee be in a position to tamper with the evidence against him/her.
  - b. should the employee's continuing presence in the organization be deemed inimical to the interest of the organization.

## **1.9 Conflict Management**

### **1.9.1 Conflict Resolution**

Whenever a dispute arises among Lawyers Alert staff, it shall be resolved in a constructive manner, i.e. solutions shall be sought which will bring about positive changes. Employees who feel unfairly treated or who have complaints about a situation or about working conditions should notify the President immediately.

### **1.9.2 Staff Behaviour**

Lawyers Alert expects its employees to adopt attitudes and behaviour that maintain a good image of the organization. Lawyers Alert employees shall display an exemplary level of professionalism and integrity. Furthermore, besides the usual rules every good employee needs to follow (respect, courtesy, punctuality), there are particular procedures of conduct for members of the organization which must be observed.

#### **(1) Political Activities**

Since Lawyers Alert is a non-political organization, employees shall not participate in activities of a purely political nature on work premises or during working hours. It is also prohibited to use the organization's materials for these purposes.

#### **(2) Discrimination and Harassment**

Under the principles established by Lawyers Alert, no employee, man or woman, has the right to put pressure on another, make intimate advances, give preferential treatment or show sexual favouritism at work.

#### **(3) Conflict of Interest**

To avoid putting themselves in a conflict of interest with the objectives and operations pursued by Lawyers Alert, employees shall respect the following guidelines:

- It is prohibited to use Lawyers Alert property for illegal or unauthorized purposes.
- It is prohibited for any Lawyers Alert employee having confidential information to disclose it without express authorization beforehand.
- Employees cannot at any time accept a job from another employer if this job interferes with their work schedule and their duties and responsibilities.
- Employees shall avoid putting themselves in situations where they may gain profit or derive direct or indirect interest by influencing a contract award.
- Employees cannot solicit or accept tips, gifts, favours or other forms of gratuities for services rendered or required to be rendered in performing their duties within the organization.

### **1.9.3 Grievances**

If an employee feels unfairly treated by circumstances that infringe on his/her rights or change his/her employment conditions, he/she should discuss the situation with his/her immediate supervisor. If, after the matter has been discussed and corrective measures taken, an employee feels it has not been satisfactorily settled, he/she can submit a grievance to the Executive Director, who will discuss and provide appropriate solution. All grievances shall be handled internally because there is no recourse to external mediation or arbitration.

## **1.10 Performance Evaluation and Skill Training**

### **1.10.1 Performance Evaluation System**

The performance evaluation system is a means by which Lawyers Alert can increase its efficiency and that of its employees. The purpose of the system is for the organization to fulfil its mission by attaining its objectives and for employees to grow and feel fulfilled through proactive performance supervision.

The system enables, among other things, the harmonizing of individual employee objectives with those of the organization, the measuring of employee potential and work performance and the support of employee improvement by working with them on their development needs.



The annual performance evaluation seeks specifically to:

- promote communication between employees and their supervisors;
- clarify expectations concerning objectives and performance;
- improve employee performance through on-going monitoring and feedback;
- assess and reward individual performance;
- allow employees to express their career aspirations.

The performance evaluation focuses on the individual employee in relation to the tasks and responsibilities assigned to him. It is not necessarily a comparison of one employee's performance with that of another. Thus, the employee's work performance is to be assessed in relation to absolute procedures, that is, according to the evaluator's performance criteria and not according to relative procedures.

The performance evaluation also allows Lawyers Alert to assess the quality of human resources in their department or organization, note important information concerning expectations and needs and clarify decisions concerning transfers or work assignments.

### **1.10.2 Elements of the Performance Evaluation System**

A performance evaluation system is composed of three main stages that generally take place over a period of a year:

#### **(1) Performance planning**

The performance planning stage enables employees and supervisors to come to an agreement on what is to be accomplished during the year and how it will be carried out. The following procedures and tools are used to facilitate this stage:

##### **a) Job description or list of duties**

Each employee must have an up-to-date job description defining the purpose of the work and the responsibilities involved.

##### **b) Setting of objectives**

For each key responsibility associated with a position, at least one objective should be established for a particular period. The objectives should be clear and quantifiable, and the assessment criteria should be mentioned.

##### **c) Individual action plan**

The individual action plan is a planning tool used to specify the steps to be taken to achieve the objectives set beforehand. The action plan should be prepared jointly with the immediate supervisor. It may also involve new initiatives facilitating improved productivity or personal capacity development.

## **(2) Performance Monitoring and Management**

Staff performance and productivity should be managed on an on-going basis throughout the year. The following elements, among others, are involved:

### **a) On-going Supervision**

This means taking the time to observe, examine sources of difficulty and seek solutions.

### **b) Regular Communication**

This involves regular exchanges so that employees can receive feedback about their performance and receive the necessary supervision.

### **c) Periodic Evaluation**

This involves formal, scheduled meetings between an employee and supervisor to discuss activities carried out, end results and the adjustment of the action plan and objectives, if necessary. A minimum of one meeting every six months is suggested to ensure satisfactory results.

## **(3) Annual Performance Evaluation**

The annual performance evaluation is the analysis, based on documentation from previous stages of the process, of an employee's work record. The evaluation addresses two fundamental questions. The first relates to the past and involves verifying what was accomplished qualitatively and quantitatively during the year. The second relates to the future and consists of identifying means to be considered to ensure the employee continues to grow and develop.

The performance evaluation form should include all the sections needed for the evaluation. This includes a section relating to performance evaluation in relation to the objectives established at the outset and in relation to the responsibilities of the position, a section that specifies or targets what is needed for the employee's development and finally a section allowing the employee and the evaluator to express their comments and affix their respective signatures. The form should also

include a performance level classification and a definition of each of these levels.

The annual performance evaluation does not have any financial impact on salaries. It is first and foremost a tool to evaluate the employee's performance and take remedial action if necessary.

### **1.10.3 Skill Training and Professional Development**

Depending on available funds, Lawyers Alert will foster the professional development of its employees in order to be as effective as possible in its activities. The training programs chosen should address the actual needs identified and expressed during performance evaluation sessions.

### **1.11 Bond**

As part of the staff and organizational development activities, Lawyers Alert may at times decide to send a designated staff person for trainings and/or further studies both abroad as well as at local level. Lawyers Alert will bear a partial cost of the trainings/studies for this. However, the designated staff sponsored for the trainings/studies is required to sign a bond with Lawyers Alert that requires him/her to complete the full tenure of working with the organization.