

# PERSONNEL POLICIES OF THE TOWN OF DUNSTABLE

## I

### Introduction and Definitions

#### Welcome

The Board of Selectmen for the Town of Dunstable is pleased that you are part of the group of employees that work for the Town.

We hope that you will enjoy working with us in a spirit of cooperation that results in top service to our community.

These policies have been written in order to answer many of the questions employees frequently ask about personnel policies. We hope it will help you adjust to the routines that make the Town of Dunstable run smoothly. This document clarifies the policies of the Town. It is not a contract, and is not to be interpreted as one.

Once again, we are happy to have you with us.

#### Purpose, Authority, and General Provisions:

The purpose of these personnel policies is to establish and operate an efficient system of personnel administration, and to provide a broad view of employee guidelines and job expectations in conformance with federal and state statutes. These policies do not create a contract between the Town of Dunstable, any employee, or group of employees. Further, the Town may not enter into an employment agreement with any employee unless specifically authorized by statute or a vote of Town Meeting. Accordingly, these personnel policies are not to be interpreted as creating contractual rights of any kind.

The Board of Selectmen reserves the right to change the provisions of these policies and guidelines at any time without prior notice in its sole discretion. The Board of Selectmen has the exclusive authority to make final determinations where there is confusion or lack of clarity in these policies and to address matters within their scope of authority that are not addressed by the guidelines set forth herein. The Board of Selectmen may also make exceptions to these policies as it deems necessary and/or appropriate in the best interests of the Town.

All individuals employed by the Town of Dunstable are employed "at will." Accordingly, either the Town or the employee may terminate the employment relationship at any time with or without cause, and with or without prior notice, unless otherwise provided by law.

The Board of Selectmen is the Appointing Authority, unless a different Board, Commission or Officer is the Appointing Authority by law, such as the Board of Library Trustees and Highway Commission. The Appointing Authority has the authority to make all appointments and impose discipline up to and including termination. The Appointing Authority may delegate any authority given it under these policies.

#### Applicability

These policies shall be applicable to all employees, whether exempt or non-exempt, except those covered by a Collective Bargaining Agreement or individual employment agreement. In any instance where these policies conflict with federal or state laws, such laws shall be deemed to prevail.

#### Administration

The Board of Selectmen may establish, rescind, or amend such administrative procedures it may consider necessary for the implementation of these rules.

## Definition of Employee Categories:

Full-Time Employment - when an employee's regularly scheduled workweek totals at least 36.5 hours.

Regular Part-Time Employment - when an employee's regularly scheduled work week is at least 20, but less than 36.5 hours.

Part-Time Employment – when an employee's regularly scheduled work week is less than 20 hours in a regular workweek.

Temporary Employment - when an employee is hired, either part-time or full-time, for a limited period of time or for a specified project.

Exempt Employee - a salaried employee in an executive, administrative, professional or other capacity, who is not entitled to overtime pay.

Non-Exempt Employee - an employee, whether paid a salary or hourly wage, whose primary duty is not executive, administrative, or professional or otherwise exempt from overtime. A non-exempt employee is entitled to overtime pay by law.

At-Will Employment - At all times, employment with the Town of Dunstable is considered to be "at will", meaning the employment relationship may be terminated at any time, for any lawful reason(s) or for no reason at all, by either the Town or the employee.

Employee Eligibility for Benefits - All full-time and regular part-time employees shall be eligible for accrued benefits (i.e., vacation and sick leave), after 6 months of employment provided, however, that after 6 months of employment, such benefits shall be deemed to have accrued from such employee's first day of service. Accrued benefits shall be prorated for regular part-time employees

Full-time employees and regular part-time employees are eligible for group insurance after 30 calendar days of employment, except basic life insurance, the eligibility for which will begin the first day of the month following the 30 calendar days of employment. Employees, who begin working for the Town of Dunstable at less than 20 hours a week, but later increase to 20 hours or more a week, would be eligible 30 days from the start of the increase in hours.

Part-time and temporary employees are generally ineligible for group insurance or paid leave except as required by law or as otherwise stated herein.

## II Standards of Conduct

The Employees of the Town of Dunstable shall at all times conduct themselves in a manner consistent with appropriate professional standards and in a way that will reflect favorably on the Town of Dunstable.

### Conduct

As a Town of Dunstable employee, the employee is expected to fulfill the responsibilities of his/her position in a manner that is consistent with the expectations of the employee's supervisor and the needs of the Town of Dunstable. The employee is expected to conduct him/herself in a professional manner in all aspects of work, formal and informal, including personal attire and presentation.

All employees of the Town of Dunstable are expected to act at all times in accordance with the standards, policies, and rules of the Town of Dunstable and to safeguard the Town of Dunstable's reputation and resources. These expectations and standards of behavior extend to the use of Town of Dunstable's facilities, equipment, supplies, and technical resources.

### Harassment

The Town is committed to providing a workplace free from unlawful sexual harassment or harassment based upon any other legally protected classification (e.g., gender, race, national origin, disability). Harassment can take different forms and can occur in the formal workplace or in off-hours activities among employees of the Town. It can also result from the actions of non-employees. No employee who files a good-faith complaint of sexual harassment or harassment based on protected class status or who cooperates in connection with a harassment investigation will be retaliated against. Such retaliation is unlawful. Please review the Town's Sexual Harassment Policy and the Town's Protected Class Harassment Policy for more information.

### Drug Free Workplace Policy

The Town of Dunstable seeks to ensure a safe, healthy and productive work environment for all employees. Evidence clearly indicates that alcohol and other drug abuse by employees results in low productivity, high absenteeism, excessive use of medical benefits and a risk to personal safety as well as to that of co-workers. In a good faith effort to comply with the Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Town of Dunstable prohibits the use of alcohol and/or illegal drugs/controlled substances on the Town of Dunstable premises. The manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession, or use of alcohol or controlled substances in the workplace or on other premises while conducting Town of Dunstable business is strictly prohibited. Controlled substances are defined for the purposes of this policy as those groups of drugs whose use is limited or prohibited by federal and/or state law. Please consult the Town's Drug Free Workplace Policy for more information.

### Conflict of Interest

All employees are subject to the Commonwealth's Conflict of Interest Law, and are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the Law's provisions and/or completing training as required by the State Ethics Commission. Among other provisions, the law prohibits employees from using or attempting to use their official position to secure for themselves or others unwarranted privileges of substantial value, which is anything having a value of \$50 or more. Further, employees must avoid conduct that would cause a reasonable person to believe that any person can unduly enjoy his or her favor in their official capacity or that they are likely to act or fail to act based on kinship, rank, position or undue influence by any party or person.

If you have any questions, you may direct them to the Board of Selectmen or the State Ethics Commission.

### Outside Employment

No employee of the Town of Dunstable may engage in any type of activity or employment which conflicts with the best interests of the Town of Dunstable. The Town of Dunstable requires that employees' activities and conduct away from the job not compete or conflict with or compromise its interest, or adversely affect an employee's job performance and their ability to fulfill all responsibilities to the Town of Dunstable. This requirement, for example, prohibits employees from performing any services for customers on non-working time that are normally performed by the Town of Dunstable personnel. This prohibition extends to the unauthorized use of any Town of Dunstable tools or equipment and the unauthorized use or application of any confidential information or techniques. In addition, employees are not to solicit or conduct outside business during paid working time.

All employees, **including regular part-time and part-time employees**, must obtain prior approval before any outside employment or other work activity is undertaken that involves the equivalent expertise and abilities required in the performance of the Town of Dunstable duties. The request for permission to accept outside employment, including self-employment, should be submitted in writing to the employee's department head. The request should state the outside employer, the nature of the job, and the hours of employment. The department head should then forward the request to the Board of Selectmen (or Appointing Authority), recommending either approval or disapproval. The Town of Dunstable Board of Selectmen (or Appointing Authority) will make the final decision. Please note that there are some circumstances in which an exemption must be granted by the Board of Selectmen regardless of whether it is the Appointing Authority. In such cases, both the Appointing Authority and Board of Selectmen must approve the request.

Full-time employees are discouraged from engaging in outside employment or other work activity. Secondary employment will not be considered an excuse for poor job performance, absenteeism, tardiness, leaving early, refusal to travel, or refusal to work overtime or different hours (i.e. evening meetings).

The Board of Selectmen (or Appointing Authority) reserves the right to rescind its approval of an employee's request for outside employment.

### Smoking Policy

Smoking is prohibited in all public buildings and within fifty (50) feet of the entrance of any public building.

### Town Property

Employees may not use Town of Dunstable property or personnel for any personal purpose, unless approved by the Board of Selectmen.

### Use of Personal Vehicles

No employee shall use a personal vehicle on official Town of Dunstable business unless a certificate of insurance is first submitted to the Board of Selectmen. Such use must be approved by the supervisor. Please see page 8 below regarding expense reimbursement for information about compensation for use of an employee's personal vehicle.

### Work Schedule

The regular workday for the Town of Dunstable employees will be the schedule as posted by the employee's department. Employees are expected to report for work on time and to work through the end

of their scheduled workday. Employees are required to accurately record their time, including all absences, late arrivals, early departures and use of paid leave.

### Hazardous Weather Conditions

The Town of Dunstable may close work sites due to hazardous weather conditions as determined by the Board of Selectmen. A telephone tree will be utilized as early as possible to notify employees and an announcement will be made on radio to notify the general public. Essential personnel must report to work unless specifically notified otherwise.

### Employee Safety and Risk Management

The Town of Dunstable takes an aggressive stand toward potential risks and losses inherent in the operation of the Town. Maintaining safe work conditions requires the cooperation of all employees. If employees see a dangerous condition or safety hazard, they must immediately report it to their supervisor.

All employees using a vehicle for Town of Dunstable purposes are required to wear a seat belt.

Attention to personal safety cannot be overemphasized. If an employee has suggestions regarding additional safety measures, they are encouraged to share them with their supervisor.

### Workers' Compensation Procedure

Despite careful efforts to maintain safe working conditions and practices, accidents do happen. The Town provides workers' compensation coverage for its employees. Workers' compensation provides insurance for medical expenses as well as partial income replacement. Employees **must** report workplace injuries immediately even if they do not require the injured employee to leave work or seek medical treatment.

***In all cases, Report of Injury Forms must be completed within 24 hours of the initial injury or illness. Failure to notify the Board of Selectmen may result in ineligibility for coverage.***

A medical provider's note that you are able to return to work will be required for return to work if you are out of work for more than 3 consecutive days.

## III Employment Practices

### Qualifications/Requirements

For each position on the staff of the Town of Dunstable, there shall be established minimum requirements and a position description as to the experience, education, licensing or other abilities and/or qualifications considered necessary for satisfactory performance of the essential duties of the position.

### Access to Employment

Essential emergency personnel, including highway personnel, shall live within a 15-mile radius of the Town.

### Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

The Town of Dunstable is an equal employment opportunity employer. The Town of Dunstable will not engage in unlawful discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, color, handicap, religion, creed, national origin, disability, genetic information, military or veteran status, age or other legally protected classification.

## Americans with Disability Act Requirements

As noted above, the Town does not discriminate on the basis of disability. Any employee who believes he or she requires an accommodation should submit a written request to his or her supervisor. The employee's supervisor or the Board of Selectmen may require the employee to provide medical documentation supporting the request for an accommodation. The Town may also require the employee to be examined by a Town-appointed physician or medical professional.

## Appointments/Promotions

The Town reserves the right to require a pre-employment examination, which may include drug testing, after a conditional offer of employment has been made.

It is the policy of the Town of Dunstable to prohibit relatives from working in the same department; provided that this rule shall not apply to relatives working in the same department prior to October 1, 2010.

Unless otherwise required by law, employees are employed on an at-will basis. Employees who are appointed for a defined term shall have their term renewed at the discretion of the Board of Selectmen (or Appointing Authority).

## Performance Standards and Evaluation

The Town of Dunstable expects its employees to be competent and efficient in performing their job duties. In order to provide constructive feedback, supervisors are encouraged to provide employees with ongoing feedback and to complete a formal performance evaluation not less than once a year.

## Discipline (Disciplinary Policy)

It is the responsibility of all employees to observe the rules and regulations necessary for the proper operation of the Town of Dunstable. Supervisors are responsible for the proper and efficient discharge of their duties and in observing and complying with these policies.

Each employee's Appointing Authority is responsible for the imposition of discipline if necessary. Appointing Authorities are encouraged to impose discipline in a manner consistent with the seriousness of the offense in consideration of all relevant factors. It is, however, ultimately the Appointing Authority's discretion whether and to what extent to impose discipline, as Town employees are employees at-will and can be terminated without cause (unless otherwise provided for by law). Disciplinary actions include, verbal and written warnings, suspensions, demotions and terminations.

## Dispute Resolution

This dispute resolution process does not alter the at-will relationship. Rather, it is intended to provide a mechanism for employees to seek resolution to disputes regarding the application of these policies and other work-related concerns.

### Process

1. Employees should, in order as applicable, process their dispute to their immediate supervisor, department head, Appointing Authority and Board of Selectmen. All disputes must be initially raised within five (5) business days of their occurrence.

2. Any dispute that cannot be resolved at the first applicable level must be reduced to writing and forwarded to the next applicable level within five (5) business days after the employee discussed the dispute at the prior level.

3. The failure to process a dispute within the time frames established herein will result in access to the remaining portion of the process being unavailable.

4. The Board of Selectmen shall remain the final arbiter and interpreter of these policies. Accordingly, its decision regarding all matters of interpretation of these policies and within its jurisdiction as the Appointing Authority will be final. With regard to disputes regarding matters of appointment (e.g., discipline, promotion, hiring) when the Board of Selectmen is not the Appointing Authority, the decision of the Appointing Authority will be final.

### Separation From Employment

Employees who choose to resign from their employment should give notice at least two (2) weeks in advance. Employees who resign may be asked to participate in an exit interview, which is designed to elicit information about the reason(s) for resignation. The Board of Selectmen or its designee will use the information gathered through the interviews to identify potential problem areas within the Town.

Regardless of the reason for separation from employment, employees will be paid for accrued vacation leave.

Employees will also generally be eligible, except in incidents of gross misconduct, to continue insurance coverage under COBRA. Employees will be provided with a COBRA notice that details their eligibility to continue coverage after their termination.

Under some circumstances, employees may be eligible for unemployment compensation. Determinations as to eligibility for this benefit are made by the Division of Unemployment Assistance.

### Records

The Town will maintain a personnel file on each employee. If you wish to review your personnel file, you must submit a written request to the Board of Selectmen's office. Typically, arrangements will be made to allow you to review your personnel file within five (5) business days.

### Employee References

Town policy is to provide only dates of employment and position(s) held in response to a request for an employment reference. In its discretion, the Board of Selectmen or the employee's Appointing Authority may provide a written or oral reference provided the employee has previously submitted a written authorization, in a form acceptable to the Town, that specifically holds the Town of Dunstable harmless from any liability resulting from such reference.

## **IV**

### **Compensation, Holiday & Leave Time**

#### Starting Rate

An employee appointed to a position will normally be compensated at the minimum starting rate for the position. Subject to the approval of the Appointing Authority and the availability of funds, any appointment at a salary above the minimum may be made only if such action is justified by exceptional qualifications of the applicant or lack of qualified applicants available at the minimum rate.

## Payroll Deductions

All earnings and deductions are reflected on the payroll stub. These may include federal and state income tax, retirement deductions, medicare, FICA, wage garnishments pursuant to an IRS Notice of court order and deductions for group benefits (e.g., health coverage).

## Compensatory Time

Employees may accrue compensatory time for hours worked in excess of their regular workday only by mutual agreement of both employee and Appointing Authority (and/or supervisor as the Appointing Authority may determine) prior to any hours actually being worked. When compensatory time is taken in lieu of legally required overtime, it shall accrue at a rate of 1.5 hours per hour worked. The calculation of compensatory time includes only hours actually worked. It does not include sick, vacation, holiday, personal or other forms of paid or unpaid leave.

All work that would result in compensatory time must be designated in advance in writing and shall be charged to the project for which the extra time was worked.

Compensatory time must be used within 30 days of acquiring said time. If an employee does not request to use the time within 30 days, the employee's supervisor will schedule the employee for compensatory time within that period or the Town will pay the employee for the compensatory time.

Exempt employees and are not eligible for overtime pay or compensatory time.

## Travel Reimbursement

Mileage for work-related travel using private vehicles will be reimbursed at a rate to be determined by the Board of Selectmen. Receipts for parking, tolls and itemization travel must be submitted before reimbursement will be authorized.

## Holidays

Full and regular part-time employees are granted paid time off on the following holidays:

<u>Holiday</u>	<u>Observed</u>
New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King Day	3rd Monday in January
Presidents' Day	3rd Monday in February
Patriots' Day	3rd Monday in April
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	1st Monday in September
Columbus Day	2nd Monday in October
Veterans' Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	4th Thursday in November
Christmas Day	December 25

Holidays that fall on Saturday will be observed on the Friday before. Holidays that fall on Sunday will be observed on the following Monday.

Temporary employees and part-time employees are not eligible for paid holidays. Employees on unpaid leave are not entitled to paid holidays.

## Vacation Leave

Full-time and regular part-time employees are eligible for vacation leave with pay. All vacation time must be used in the year it is earned, and may not be carried over from year-to-year. Vacation entitlement for the first and last months of an individual's employment shall be pro-rated on a calendar basis to the date of hire or termination, as appropriate.

All requests for vacation must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor. Employees are encouraged to take vacation on a regular basis to allow for proper rest from the rigors of work. If vacation requests conflict, seniority will prevail only to the extent that the job duties are similar in nature.

Vacation time may be used in hourly units.

Vacation time does not accrue during periods of unpaid leave. As noted above on Page 7, unused vacation time will be paid upon termination.

Vacation leave with pay shall accrue as follows:

Less than 5 years of service	.038314 hrs per hr worked
5 years but less than 10 years	.057471 hrs per hr worked
10 years but less than 20 years	.076628 hrs per hr worked
20 years and more	.095785 hrs per hr worked

Therefore, for full-time regular employees, the accruals are equivalent:

Less than 5 years of service	10 days per year
5 years but less than 10 years	15 days per year
10 years but less than 20 years	20 days per year
20 years and more	25 days per year

Vacation accruals are pro-rated for regular part-time employees. Temporary employees and part-time employees are not eligible for vacation leave.

## Personal Leave

Each full-time employee with at least six (6) months of service is allowed, with prior approval of their supervisor, three personal days per year. Regular part-time employees are eligible for personal leave on a pro-rated basis. Temporary employees and part-time employees are not eligible for personal leave. Requests for personal leave must be given within a reasonable notice period to the supervisor subject to extenuating circumstances. Personal leave is not to be used as vacation, and may not be combined with vacation leave. Personal leave does not carry over to the next year and may not be accumulated. Personal Leave is not paid upon separation from employment. Personal leave does not accrue during unpaid leave.

## Sick Leave

Sick leave is a time off benefit for full-time and regular part-time employees and is generally for protection of employees against loss of pay due to personal illness. Sick leave accrues at the rate of .05471 hours per hour worked. Sick time does not accrue during unpaid leave. Sick leave may not be accumulated from one year to the next in excess of 150 days. Regular part-time employees are eligible to accrue sick leave on a pro-rated basis. Temporary and part-time employees are not eligible for sick leave. Sick leave may be used in hourly increments. Sick leave will not be advanced before accrual unless approved by the Board of Selectmen.

On the first day of absence from work due to illness, the employee shall report his or her illness to the supervisor no later than 30 minutes after the beginning of his or her scheduled work assignment, or as may otherwise be specified by the supervisor. After 3 consecutive days of missed work, a medical

provider's note will be required from the employee (including injuries or illnesses the employee believes are work-related.) An employee's supervisor may also require a medical provider's note if the supervisor reasonably suspects the employee is abusing sick leave.

### Sick Leave Buyback

Twenty-five per cent (25%) of an employee's accumulated sick time (not to exceed twenty-five per cent (25%) of the maximum 150 days allowed) may be paid out upon retirement. Sick leave will not be paid out upon any other separation from employment other than retirement through the State retirement system. Employees hired after July 1, 2010 are not eligible for sick leave buyback.

### Bereavement Leave

Following the death of a family member, full-time, regular part-time and part-time employees are entitled to be paid leave for up to four consecutive calendar days. A family member is defined as follows: husband, wife, significant other, child, parent (either spouse), brother or sister of employee. All of other requests for bereavement leave shall be granted at the discretion of the Board of Selectmen.

### Court Service (Jury Duty)

An employee who is subpoenaed by a Federal Court, State Court, or political subdivision to serve as a juror or is subpoenaed to be a witness is granted leave for this purpose. The Town of Dunstable will pay the employee the difference between any compensation received from jury duty or witness stipend and the employee's current salary as provided by law.

### Family and Medical Leave and Small Necessities Leave

The Town provides leave in accordance with the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and the State Small Necessities Leave Act (SNLA).

The FMLA generally provides eligible employees with leave for the birth or adoption of a child, to care for a newborn child, for the employee's serious health condition, for the serious health condition of an immediate family member, due to qualifying exigencies associated with an immediately family members activation in the military or to care for an immediate family member who was injured or suffered an illness while on active military duty.

The SNLA provides for leave to participate in school activities directly related to the educational advancement of a son or daughter of the employee such as parent-teacher conferences or interviewing for a new school; to accompany a son or daughter of the employee to routine medical or dental appointments or appointments such as check-ups or vaccinations; or to accompany an elderly relative of the employee to routine medical or dental appointments or appointments for other professional services related to the elder's care, such as interviewing at nursing or group homes.

The Town maintains separate FMLA and SNLA policies. Please consult those policies for more information.

### Maternity/Paternity Leave

Maternity/Paternity Leave shall be administered as required by M.G.L. Chapter 149, Section 105D. In general, a full-time female employee with at least three months of service with the Town of Dunstable is entitled to eight weeks of unpaid leave for the purpose of birth of a child. Male and female full-time employees are eligible for such leave for the purpose of adoption. Requests for such leave shall be made at least (2) weeks in advance. Employees must indicate whether they will be returning to their position after their leave.

## Military Leave

The Town provides military leave pursuant to State and Federal Law. Accordingly, the Town will provide employees who serve in the military reserves with their full salary while on annual training. Members who are called to active service will be granted leave. The rights of such employees vary depending upon the length of their service. Employees should direct any questions regarding military leave to the Board of Selectmen.

## **V Employee Benefits**

The Town of Dunstable offers certain benefits to eligible employees including health and life insurance. Benefits currently provided by the Town of Dunstable are outlined in this section.

### Group Health and Life Insurance

Full-time employees and regular part-time employees who are in pay status are entitled to health and basic life insurance through a group policy held by the Town of Dunstable. The Town of Dunstable contributes 75% of the premium. The employee contributes 25% through payments deducted directly from his/her paycheck. This coverage will continue for one month after termination of employment. COBRA rights and requirements may then apply.

The Town of Dunstable also contributes 100% of the cost of a \$2,000.00 life insurance policy for full-time and regular part-time employees. Additional life insurance and dental insurance can be purchased at full cost basis by the employee. The Town of Dunstable does not make any contribution for such additional coverage.

Health insurance coverage may be continued, at one's own expense, for up to 36 months for a spouse or dependent child of an employee who dies while employed by the Town of Dunstable. In the case of a divorce or legal separation, health insurance may be continued for dependents, at their own expense, or at the expense of the employee in accordance with the divorce/separation agreement. Continuation of this coverage also ceases if the premium is not paid on a timely basis or if coverage is obtained through another group.

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) of 1986, as Amended (Public Law 99-272) Title X, Section 10002; 100 Stat 227; 29 U.S.C. 1161-1168, contains provisions giving certain former employees, spouses and dependent children the right to temporary continuation of health coverage at group rates. This coverage is only available in specific instances for a period of up to 18 months and at the employee's cost. If payment for coverage becomes delinquent, coverage may end.

Employees will receive an Election Notice regarding their COBRA rights when the Town is advised of a qualifying event.

The Town reserves the right to alter, amend, modify or discontinue benefits to the extent permitted by law, including the change in health, dental and life insurance plans and providers along with premium contribution rates and the plan design (e.g., co-payments and deductibles) in its sole discretion.

### Employee Assistance Program

An employee, who is experiencing difficulties in his/her personal life to the extent that job performance, workplace atmosphere or general well-being is affected, is encouraged to seek help through the

Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP is designed to help employees and their family members by providing crisis intervention, assessment, referral and short-term counseling services in order to help identify and resolve personal issues and stress, illness, alcohol or other drug abuse, legal issues, financial or marital difficulties, as well as other distresses. The EAP program is confidential and information cannot be released without the employee's permission except as required by law.

### Retirement Procedure

Subject to the rules and regulations promulgated by the Middlesex County Retirement System and the Massachusetts General Laws, all employees working at least 20 hours per week are required to participate in the Middlesex County Retirement System, in lieu of the Social Security System. Employees hired on or after July 1, 1996, have 9% of their regular compensation deducted from retirement. In addition, employees hired after January 1, 1979, will have 2% withheld from regular compensation in excess of \$30,000 (as pro-rated for biweekly payroll).

Each employee must initiate the normal superannuation retirement procedure by making a written request to the Retirement Board. For additional information and procedures, contact the Middlesex County Retirement System directly or the Town Treasurer.

### Deferred Compensation

As permitted by the Federal Revenue Act of 1978, a full-time or regular part-time employee may, as allowed by law, choose to have part of his/her pay withheld and invested in a savings plan, annuity, life insurance or any combination thereof. The entire amount invested is deducted prior to the withholding of both federal and state income taxes

### Training, Education and Conferences (Professional Development)

The Town of Dunstable endeavors to promote both individual and institutional training programs. After 6 months of employment, full-time, regular part-time and part-time employees may request work related educational training. These requests must be approved by the immediate supervisor prior to attendance. The Town of Dunstable may reimburse reasonable costs of such training if fiscally feasible and prior written approval is received.