

**§501. Employment and dismissal of county employees**

**1. Employment.** All county officers or department heads shall submit to the county commissioners or the County Personnel Board, if one has been established under article 2, the name of any person the county officer or department head proposes to employ or the names of more than one person from which the county commissioners or personnel board are to select a person for employment. The county commissioners or the County Personnel Board may approve the employment of the person or select a person for employment. If approval is withheld or a selection is not made, the county commissioners or the County Personnel Board, within 14 days after the name or names have been submitted, shall notify the county officer or department head of the reasons for their disapproval or failure to make a selection.

[PL 1991, c. 548, Pt. D, §3 (AMD).]

**2. Qualifications.** All county employees shall be appointed without regard to any political affiliation and solely on the basis of professional qualifications relating to the work to be performed or their potential for acquiring those qualifications.

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

**2-A. Probationary period for corrections officials.** A person who is hired as jailer, master, keeper or a subordinate assistant or employee under section 1501 must complete an employment probationary period that lasts for one year. During the probationary period, a person who is hired as jailer, master, keeper or a subordinate assistant or employee under section 1501 may be dismissed, suspended or otherwise disciplined without cause. Dismissal, suspension or any other disciplinary action against an employee during the probationary period is not subject to the grievance and arbitration provision of the collective bargaining agreement.

[PL 2021, c. 601, §11 (AMD).]

**3. Dismissal, suspension, discipline.** Following a reasonable probationary period consistent with the provisions of subsection 2-A and section 2701, a county officer or department head may dismiss, suspend or otherwise discipline a department employee only for cause, except as provided in paragraph A. Cause for dismissal, suspension or disciplinary action must be a just, reasonable, appropriate and substantial reason for the action taken that relates to or affects the ability, performance of duties, authority or actions of the employee or the public's rights or interests.

A. An employee may be dismissed by a county officer or department head only for cause and only with the prior approval of the county commissioners or personnel board, except that county employees may be laid off or dismissed, with the approval of the county commissioners or personnel board, to meet the requirements of budget reductions or governmental reorganization.

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

B. In every case of suspension or disciplinary action other than dismissal, at the employee's request, the county commissioners or personnel board shall investigate the circumstances and fairness of the action and, if they find the charges unwarranted, shall order the employee's reinstatement to the employee's former position with no loss of pay, rights or benefits resulting from the suspension or disciplinary action. [PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

[PL 2009, c. 106, §2 (AMD).]

**4. Application to county commissioners' employees.** Subsections 1 and 3 do not apply to county employees directly employed by the county commissioners, unless a County Personnel Board has been established under article 2.

[PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. A, §2 (NEW); PL 1987, c. 737, Pt. C, §106 (NEW); PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD); PL 1989, c. 104, Pt. C, §§8, 10 (AMD).]

**5. Application to chief deputy.** Subsections 1, 2 and 3 do not apply to the appointment, dismissal, suspension or discipline of a chief deputy by a sheriff.

[PL 2011, c. 15, §2 (NEW).]

**SECTION HISTORY**

PL 1987, c. 737, §§A2,C106 (NEW). PL 1989, c. 6 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 9, §2 (AMD). PL 1989, c. 104, §§C8,10 (AMD). PL 1991, c. 548, §D3 (AMD). PL 2001, c. 349, §5 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 106, §§ 1, 2 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 15, §2 (AMD). PL 2021, c. 601, §11 (AMD).

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