

ARTICLE 52 – Climate/Culture Surveys and Conflict Facilitation Process

52.1 Introduction

The County and the Union agree that mutual respect between and among managers, supervisors, employees, and coworkers is integral to the efficient conduct of County business. The purpose of this Article is to replace Article 52 of this agreement and establish two programs intended to foster such an environment: (1) a Climate/Culture Survey Process to assess the working climate in departments and (2) a **Conflict Facilitation Process**. The purpose of these two programs is to facilitate communication and positive working relationships between employees and their supervisors, to foster an environment of mutual respect and one where employees can provide feedback to the County, its Departments and supervisors without fear of retaliation or inappropriate behaviors.

52.3 Conflict Facilitation Process

(a) Facilitation will be conducted by facilitators mutually agreed upon by the parties which may include an outside facilitator. The parties (MCGEO and the County) will each designate a neutral person to assist the participants and the Facilitator with the process. Any cost for the process shall be equally shared by the parties. (b) An employee who believes that he/she has been treated unfairly or inappropriately by his/her supervisor may request facilitation under this process. The employee must make a written request for facilitation via MCGEO and/or the Director of Human Resources, or his/her designee. The process may also be initiated by management. OHR will notify the relevant department director of the request. (c) Within fourteen (14) days of the request for facilitation, the parties will select co-facilitators who will review the request and the issues involved and to ensure the following: (1) That the issues are appropriate for the process and have the potential to be resolved by facilitation, (2) That the issues are not matters that are currently, or were previously brought forward, utilizing the Article 57 process, or the subject or of a prior or current grievance or any other pending action/process, and (3) That the issue is not more appropriately handled in the EEO process. (d) The co-facilitators will schedule a meeting with all involved parties within five (5) days after reviewing the request. (e) The process includes the following possible outcomes: (1) The affected parties to the dispute resolve the dispute; (2) The parties do not resolve the dispute; the co-facilitators may make recommendations for further action, if any, to the Department Director, OHR Director, and Union. Possible actions include training, skill building, mentoring, referral to the EAP, etc.; (3) Request by any party for OHR intervention, including, providing training, additional facilitation, team-building, etc.; (4) The employee/Union may file a grievance in accordance with Article 10 if the dispute has not been settled to the employee's/Union's satisfaction. (f) The parties agree: (1) to utilize the conflict facilitation process in good faith; (2) that no employee shall be subject to retaliation for participating in the conflict facilitation process; (3) that the process shall not be used to intimidate or harass supervisors for managing responsibly; and (4) that participation in the process is not voluntary.