

### Offer Letter Guidelines

## Make Sure Your Employees are Fully Aware – and You Are Fully Protected

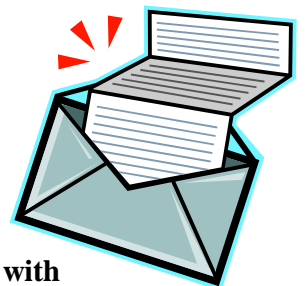


Bringing a new employee into your team can be stressful for the new kid – new faces, new personalities, new duties, a new desk, all have to be navigated and mastered. And it's no easier on your end: Fitting the New Arrival into your existing work schedules and patterns can be just as stressful for you and the rest of the team as it is on the new employee. Even more, down the road if you ever have to explain the facts to an employee who claims he has a guarantee of perpetual employment, or doesn't agree that working the telephone is "essential" to his job, or thinks she should be getting more vacation, or "was never told" that she had to know how to use a spreadsheet, or didn't think the terms of the Archdiocesan Employee Handbook applied to him, you'll be glad that your file shows that the facts were laid out from the start. Much early stress and many later misunderstandings can be prevented by a little clarity up front.

One often-overlooked way to ease entry anxiety and prevent later confusion is with a carefully crafted "offer letter." It's easy and effective, and both you and your employees will be happier knowing there is no doubt about what they're entitled to, and what is expected of them.\*

So, when you hire new employees, give them a letter that:

- Sets forth the date employment will start,
- States the essential (i.e., integral and necessary) duties of the job, the starting rate of pay and the regularly expected work schedule,
- Reiterates that the employment is at-will,
- **Perhaps most important, makes clear that the employment is subject to the terms of the Archdiocesan Parish (or School) Employee Handbook, and instructs the employee to review, sign and return all acknowledgments contained in the Handbook, along with all the other required paperwork, and**
- Asks the employee to sign the letter in acknowledgment of its receipt.



Then, keep the signed letter and all the signed acknowledgement forms in the employee's personnel file.

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\* NB: Now that there are Employee Handbooks for parishes and schools, the Archdiocese no longer routinely uses employment contracts, except in a few special cases. Offer letters, if they incorporate the terms of the handbook, give the same protections more simply and easily. If you think you have a situation that requires a specialized contract, please contact the Archdiocesan Legal Office for guidance.

The exact wording of the letter will vary with the type of position, but here's a good sample to start with (please contact your Human Resources Office at 415-614-5538 for specific help and guidance in crafting a letter for the particular position being filled). Nearly all of your new hires will fall under government Wage & Hour protections and this sample offer letter is drafted with that in mind. Please call the HR Office if you think the position you are hiring should be classified as "exempt", rather than "non-exempt."

**SAMPLE OFFER LETTER FOR NON-EXEMPT POSITIONS**



Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

We are happy to offer you the position of \_\_\_\_\_ at St. \_\_\_\_\_ Parish, commencing \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_; this letter will confirm the terms and conditions of your employment.

As we discussed, in this position you will be an employee of the Archdiocese of San Francisco, working at \_\_\_\_\_ [e.g., the rectory] and reporting directly to \_\_\_\_\_ [e.g., the pastor]. Your ordinary expected schedule will be from \_\_\_\_\_ a.m. to \_\_\_\_\_ p.m., with an unpaid hour for lunch, for an expected weekly total of \_\_\_\_\_ hours. Your rate of pay will be \_\_\_\_\_ per hour.

Your position includes the duties listed on the attached sheet, along with other duties as assigned.

Please note that your employment with the Archdiocese is governed by the terms of the Parish [or School] Employee Handbook, a copy of which is being given to you with this letter. Please review the Handbook carefully. As the Handbook points out, your employment is "at will," which means is that either you or the Archdiocese may terminate your employment at any time. The Archdiocese of San Francisco, as stated in the Employee Handbook, expects all employees to conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the teachings and mission of the Catholic Church.

Under federal law, your employment will also be subject to proof of your legal right to work in the United States and completion of the Immigration and Naturalization Service Employment Eligibility Form (form I-9). These documents, along with the signed acknowledgments contained in the Employee Handbook, should be returned to the pastor no later than your first day of employment.

Please confirm your receipt of this letter and of the Employee Handbook by signing and dating below and returning to me.

I am delighted to be able to offer you this position, and look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_



I have received and understand this letter and attachment.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date