Policy Statement – Hiring supervisors are responsible for following all legal and system requirements when filling vacant positions including, but not limited to, non-discrimination and affirmative action requirements. A variety of resources are available to assist in this important area. It is the goal of the Association to employ quality staff whose credentials and demonstrated expertise match the needs of the position.

Pre-Employment Background Check – Cornell Cooperative Extension associations will conduct pre-employment background checks on all new hires (both regular and temporary employees). The background checks will minimally include: reference checking; employment and education verification; and criminal and sex offender checks. Criminal and sex offender checks will be conducted upon association adoption of this policy.

Employment-at-Will – The Association follows the practice of employment-at-will. This Policy Manual and any document or offer of employment neither creates a contract, implied or express, nor offers a warranty of benefits. The Association does not promise or guarantee employment for any specified period of time. Either an employee or the Association may end the employment relationship at any time for any lawful reason with or without cause or notice.

Term Appointments – Exempt extension educators are hired with a set term of employment with specified ending date. The original appointment offer will be for up to 2 years with the first year being an orientation period per policy. Subsequent offers of reappointment may be for up to 4 years or on an ongoing basis without a term specified. Any staff person hired for special, limited period grants or projects may also be hired with a stated term of employment. All temporary and casual staff are hired with a specified term of employment. Term employment is not a contract of employment and either the employee or the Association may end the employment relationship at any time for any lawful reason with or without cause or notice.

Employment Contracts - A supervisor does not have the authority to enter into a verbal or written employment contract with an applicant or employee. An employment contract might be used in a unique situation but the agreement must specify it is a contract, must be in writing and must be signed by both the Executive Director and the employee. No other oral or written statements or representations can limit the Association's right to terminate employment at will.

Independent Contractor - Independent contractors are not employees and may only be utilized if the circumstances meet legal requirements set by the Department of Labor and the Internal Revenue Service. Supervisors must review any potential use of independent contractors or consultants outside the payroll system with the Executive Director or designate to ensure proper and legal use of such arrangement.