Constituency Operations Handbook

Information Brief

11th PARLIAMENT
REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

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INTRODUCTION

In the performance of his duties as a parliamentary representative, each Member of the House of Representatives is entitled to an office within his Constituency and to organise the activities of that office as he sees fit, in accordance with approved policies.

The Office of the Parliament is responsible for providing guidance on the procedures and policies for the operations of Constituency Offices as may be recommended by the House Committee and approved by the Speaker of the House. Many of those policies are contained in this handbook.

The Clerk of the House, as Accounting Officer for the Parliament, is responsible for ensuring accountability of the funds expended for the operations of all Constituency Offices, in accordance with the Exchequer and Audit Act.

Jacqui Sampson-Meiguel
Clerk of the House
September 2015

ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONSTITUENCY OFFICE

One of the major functions of a Member of Parliament (MP) is that of representation. Section 70 of the Constitution states – *'Trinidad and Tobago shall be divided into…constituencies and each such constituency shall return one member to the House of Representatives'*. In this regard, arrangements are made by the Office of the Parliament to provide Constituency Offices for MPs to meet and engage their constituents. In contrast to the prestige of the Parliament Chamber, the functioning of Constituency Offices takes place far from the media spotlight and away from high profile politics. However, these offices assist in keeping elected representatives connected with their constituents.

On becoming an elected MP you will be responsible for establishing and managing a Constituency Office, and therefore you should be mindful of the following guidelines:

- The office must be conveniently located and easily accessible to walking, travelling and motoring constituents. Appropriate accommodation should be made for the elderly and for persons who are differently-abled.
- The Constituency Office should be inviting and have cross-partisan appeal. Therefore, the display of party signs, symbols, posters and political party colours are

prohibited. The Office of the Parliament will use standardised colours for Constituency Offices.

- The purpose of the Constituency Office is to communicate your commitment to constituents.

ACCOMMODATION

1.01 Entitlement

(a) MPs are entitled to establish one main office within their Constituency. However, subject to approval by the House Committee, the Office of the Parliament will assist with the establishment of a maximum of three (3) sub-offices, in constituencies with a large, geographically dispersed population.

(b) The Property and Real Estate Services Division (PRESD) will provide Members with suitable and acceptable accommodation in government buildings where available. The Office of the Parliament seeks to have all Constituency Offices located in state owned buildings as far as is possible.

(c) In constituencies where government buildings are not available, the Office of the Parliament will rent a suitable office at a maximum cost of $15,000.00 per month for a main office, and $5,000.00 per month, in total, for a maximum of three (3) sub-offices.

(d) In cases where the full amount for rental of a main office is not utilized, the remaining sum may be applied towards the rental cost of sub-offices.

(d) The Office of the Parliament will only pay the approved maximum rent of $15,000.00 for main offices and $5,000, in total, for all sub-offices in accordance with the established procedure. Accordingly, any unauthorised office/sub-office will be operated at the private expense of the MP.

(e) Members are responsible for ensuring that the Constituency Office meets safety and security requirements as well as the protection of Constituency Office staff, office assets and information and the general public.

1.02 Rental Agreements

(f) Members are not permitted to enter into lease agreements. Negotiations in relation to Constituency Offices, as well as the execution of tenancy agreements, will be between the Office of the Parliament and the landlord for the particular premises under consideration.

(g) The Office of the Parliament must not enter into rental arrangements which create a conflict of interest.

(h) Members will be provided with a copy of the rental agreement for their Constituency Office. This rental agreement will detail the responsibilities of each party to the agreement (such as the payment of utility bills) and the terms and conditions governing the use of the premises.

1.03 Use of Constituency Office

(i) Constituency Offices are designed to encourage communication between the MP and all constituents, and must therefore be operated on a strictly non-partisan basis.

(j) A Constituency Office should not be used for non-constituency related activities, such as political party events, election campaigning or personal activities.

(k) The exterior signage located at the Constituency Office should not display the name or logo of a political party, use political party colours or contain statements of a recognisable and partisan nature.

1.04 Change of Member

(l) A Member shall vacate the Constituency Office within twenty-four (24) hours of his resignation.

(m) A newly elected Member shall take possession of the office within five (5) working days of being elected.

(n) All furniture and equipment owned by the Office of the Parliament must be handed over to the newly elected representative on the prescribed form and witnessed by a representative of the Clerk of the House.

1.05 Repairs and Maintenance

(o) A Member must report to the Office of the Parliament, as soon as practicable, any incident of fire, flood, break-in, theft, or other event which has resulted in damage or loss to his Constituency Office. In the case of fire, break-in or theft, police reports are mandatory and proof of the report will be required for insurance claims.

(p) Subject to the availability of funds, the Office of the Parliament will undertake to effect repairs to Constituency Offices located in government buildings which are in need of repair works following an assessment by the relevant personnel and the submission of a report.

(q) Staff of the Office of the Parliament shall visit Constituency Offices from time to time to provide appropriate services and support.

STAFF

As an MP you are entitled to employ persons in your Constituency Offices, subject to certain restrictions as set out in

this Handbook. These persons are your employees and as such, you are authorised to promote, discipline, and terminate them.

Members are reminded that the best Constituency staff loves people, engages in problem-solving, and has a sound knowledge of their communities.

2.01 Entitlement

(a) A Member may employ persons in his main Constituency Office. However, the total sum to be expended in salary payments shall not exceed $45,700.00 per month.

(b) Each main Constituency Office should have the following persons on staff:

(1) An Office Manager
(2) An Administrative/Clerical Assistant
(3) A Research Officer
(4) A Driver/Messenger
(5) A Cleaner.

As well as other office support staff as may be required by the MP.

(c) Your Office Manager will be expected to manage the day to day operations of the Constituency Office and serve as liaison with the Administrative Supportive Unit (ASU) of the Office of the Parliament.

Salaries

(d) The Office of the Parliament acting on behalf of the Member will process the monthly salaries for the employees of Constituency Offices, as approved by him. The following statutory deductions will apply to all such employees:

(1) Income Tax (where applicable)
(2) Health Surcharge
(3) National Insurance.

(e) An Employee's net salary will be paid into his bank account on the day before the last working day of the month.

(f) Suggested salaries have been included in the Job Descriptions at **Appendix I** of this Handbook.

(g) No employee shall be paid below the national minimum wage, which is $15 per hour.

(h) In constituencies where sub-offices have been approved, Members will be permitted to employ a maximum of three (3) persons at a combined salary of $5,000.00 per month. Sub-offices can be operated on a part-time basis and therefore staff of a sub-office may be employed as part-time employees.

Job Descriptions and Staff Duties

(i) For the purpose of ensuring consistency in job titles, salaries and duties/responsibilities, and to ensure that you have not

exceeded your limit, Members are advised to liaise with the ASU prior to engaging employees.

(j) Sample Job Descriptions have been included at **Appendix I** of this Handbook and can be used as a guide by Members.

2.02 Engagement of Constituency Office Staff

Restriction on Employment of Relatives

(a) Members are restricted from employing relatives as employees in their Constituency Offices. Relatives include the following individuals:

(1) spouses;
(2) co-habitants;
(3) children/step-children/adopted children/grandchildren;
(4) parents/step-parents/grandparents;
(5) siblings;
(6) nephews/nieces;
(7) uncles/aunts; and
(8) cousins.

Letter of Offer of Employment

(b) The following information should be included when drafting an Offer of Employment letter to a successful candidate, for a position in a Constituency Office:

(1) the name and address of the employee;

(2) the name and address of the Constituency Office;
(3) job title;
(4) the starting date of employment;
(5) the hours of work and any related terms and conditions such as lunch hour, breaks etc.;
(6) salary and/or benefits; and
(7) the person to whom the employee will report.

(c) The letter of offer should be prepared in duplicate, one (1) signed copy for the person to be employed and one (1) signed copy for the employee's file at the Office of the Parliament. You may retain a photocopy among your Constituency Office's records.

(d) A sample letter of employment is attached at **Appendix II** of this Handbook.

Contract of Employment

(e) A simple employment contract must also be executed between the MP and the employee and must contain the following information:
    (1) Terms and conditions relating to vacation leave, sick leave, maternity leave and emergency leave;
    (2) Length of notice required by each party to terminate employment;
    (3) Job description;

(4) Salary; and
(5) Hours of work.

(f) A sample of a contract of employment can be found at **Appendix II** of this Handbook.

2.03 Employee Records

((a) Members shall keep and maintain files of all employees with details of employment, including contracts of employment, terms and conditions and other information related to the employees' record of service.

(b) In the case of each person to be employed, the Member shall submit to the Clerk of the House and the ASU a copy of the letter of employment as well as a completed Constituency Employment Data Form (CEDF). A specimen of the CEDF form is attached at **Appendix III** of this Handbook.

(c) The CEDF and the letter of employment must bear the signature of the Member.

(d) Once the CEDF form is fully completed, the person employed will be remunerated at the end of each month in accordance with the Member's instructions.

(e) Proposed changes in staffing must be communicated (in writing) to the ASU no later than the 15th day of the month in which the change is proposed to be made.

(g) Members may seek assistance from the ASU for the conducting of background checks and determining employee benefits/entitlements information.

(h) Members are required to maintain up to date information on their employees' service including attendance, sick leave and annual vacation leave records

2.04 Administrative Procedures

(a) Constituency Office staff are employees of the Member and not the Office of the Parliament or the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. Therefore they serve at the pleasure of the MP.

(b) The Office of the Parliament is responsible for maintaining pay records and other subsidiary records that facilitate the processing of sick leave, vacation leave, annual tax statements, National Insurance benefits and terminal benefits.

(c) Incidents of short payments and overpayments will be addressed promptly. However, no deduction shall be made from an employee's salary without prior notification to him.

(d) The Internal Audit Unit (IAU) of the Office of the Parliament will provide audit services.

2.05 Leave Entitlement

(a) Constituency Office employees are entitled to annual (vacation) leave:

(1) 1-3 years service – ten (10) working days per annum

(2) Over 3-6 years service – fifteen (15) working days per annum

(3) Over 6 years service – twenty (20) working days per annum

(b) No member of staff shall be permitted to accumulate leave in excess of two (2) years entitlement. Therefore, where due to the exigencies of running the Constituency Office leave is not utilised by the end of the first year, the ASU should be immediately informed so that arrangements could be made for the carrying forward of the leave entitlement into year two (2).

(c) Staff will also be entitled to sick leave of fourteen (14) working days per annum with full pay after six (6) months continuous service. A period exceeding two (2) days must be supported by a medical certificate.

(c) Female staff will be entitled to fourteen (14) weeks of paid maternity leave after twelve (12) months continuous service. Pay is calculated by computing the difference between the pay of the person and such maternity benefits that she receives under the National Insurance Act.

(d) When employees are required by a Member to work excessive hours or on weekends or public holidays, the Member may grant such employee compensatory time off, as the Member considers appropriate.

2.06 Disciplinary Action

(a) The Office of the Parliament provides up-to-date advice and information on employment issues and industrial relations best practice. This includes formal guidance on matters of discipline or dismissal. Whenever an employee's dismissal is contemplated (for cause or otherwise), the MP is strongly urged to consult with the Legal Unit of the Office of the Parliament.

(b) Conduct that may trigger disciplinary action/termination include but are not limited to:

(1) unauthorised absences;
(2) poor punctuality;
(3) disrespect/discourtesy to constituents;
(4) poor job performance;
(5) inappropriate dress/grooming;
(6) insubordination;
(7) breaches of confidentiality;
(8) misuse of office property;
(9) damaging office property;
(10) theft/fraud;
(11) substance abuse;
(12) assault/sexual harassment; and
(13) gross misconduct.

Categories of Misconduct

(c) The seriousness of alleged misconduct will determine the appropriateness of any disciplinary action to be imposed. The following table can serve as a guide in relation to categories of breaches of conduct by an employee:

Category: Minor	Category: More Serious	Category: Gross Misconduct
• Poor punctuality	• Insubordination	• Theft/Fraud
• Poor job performance	• Misuse of Constituency Office Property	• Unauthorised possession of Constituency Office Property
• Disrespect/Discourtesy to constituents	• Damage to Constituency Office Property	• Theft of Constituency Office Property
• Disrespect/Discourtesy to Members	• Unauthorised absences	• Willful damage/destruction Constituency Office Property
• Inappropriate Dress/Grooming	• Breaches of Confidentiality	• Incapacity to work due to alcohol/drugs
		• Violent behavior/ assault
		• Obscene/ abusive language
		• Sexual harassment

Development of Disciplinary Procedures

(d) Disciplinary action should be used as a tool to remedy an employee's behavior. However, ensuring fairness should always be a paramount consideration. As employer, an MP must ensure that a resulting termination is not regarded as harsh, oppressive and/or contrary to the principles of good industrial relations practice.

Progressive Discipline

(e) The progressive form of disciplining employees allows employees the opportunity to correct problematic performance. Progressive discipline involves using increasingly harsh penalties for each occasion an employee violates work rules. In treating with poor performance standards, or more serious forms of misconduct, the Member must always give employees reasonable timeframes to allow for improvement.

Informal Action

(f) In certain instances, the Member may deem that minor conduct or performance matters are best dealt with informally. The option of dealing with minor conduct or performance infractions in an informal manner is within the complete discretion of the Member. The Member may discuss with the employee expected standards of conduct and/or performance and a time period during which conduct/performance is expected to improve.

(g) The Member should also advise the employee on the likely consequences if improvements are not apparent, such as formal disciplinary action being taken against the employee.

(h) When the conduct/performance of an employee has not improved in the time-frame discussed, a formal oral warning should be issued to the employee.

Formal Oral/Verbal Warning

(i) When an employee's conduct or performance is unsatisfactory, the Member can then issue a formal oral warning. This warning should clearly and unambiguously state the employee's infraction and a timeframe for improvement. The employee should be informed of the consequences if improvement is not forthcoming.

(j) Finally, the date, time, and content of the oral warning should be documented and a copy forwarded to the Clerk of the House to be placed on the employee's file.

Written Warning

(k) Where an offence is more serious, or where conduct/performance does not improve after an oral warning, the employee can then be issued a written warning. The written warning must contain details of misconduct and, if previously warned, details surrounding the first warning. The warning must identify a time frame for improvement and the likely consequences if:

(1) improvement in conduct/performance is not forthcoming; or
(2) any further act of serious misconduct is committed.

(l) The employee must be informed that should any of the above occur, a final written warning will be issued.

(m) Finally, the date and time when the warning letter was issued should be documented and a copy forwarded to the Clerk of the House to be placed on the employee's file. Such a letter should be hand delivered to the employee who should be made to sign as having received the warning letter.

Final Written Warning

(n) If performance standards do not improve or serious misconduct is repeated, the employee should be issued a final warning letter. The letter should detail the serious misconduct that has been repeated or the failure to improve conduct/performance within the time set. The letter must clearly indicate that it is a final warning letter, after which dismissal would result if there is a failure to improve performance or conduct.

(o) Finally, the date and time when the final warning letter was issued should be documented and a copy forwarded to the Clerk of the House to be placed on the employee's file. The letter should be hand delivered to the employee who should be made to sign as having received the final warning letter.

(p) Samples of warning letters are attached at **Appendix II** of this Handbook.

2.07 Resignation/Termination of Employment

Dismissal (for cause)

(a) Having gone through all the steps of progressive discipline, if performance/conduct does not improve, or further serious misconduct occurs, the employee may be dismissed.

(b) In a dismissal/termination letter, clear and concise grounds for dismissal must be stated. The Member must detail the employee's history of poor conduct/performance and/or repeated acts of serious misconduct. The letter should recall all disciplinary action previously taken against the employee. Reference should be made to the fact that the employee was warned in his final warning letter that further infractions would lead to dismissal.

Termination of Employment

(c) Under the sample employment contract, the services of an employee may be terminated by either party after notice is given in writing, one (1) month in advance.

(d) Members are advised that the Office of the Parliament must be informed, in writing, in the event of a resignation of an employee at the Constituency Office. Your correspondence must clearly state the effective date of resignation/termination. In the case of termination of employment, a copy of the letter sent to the employee terminated must be submitted to the Clerk of the House.

(e)The effective date of termination is the day immediately following the final day worked by the employee, or the day immediately following their final day of vacation leave. Information about the notice requirement of one (1) month as set forth in the sample agreement should be included in the termination letter. A sample of a termination letter is attached at **Appendix II** of this Handbook.

Severance Benefits

(f) Where the employee has worked for more than one (1) year but less than five (5) years, a severance of half month salary will be paid for each year completed.

(g) Where service of the employee is five (5) years and over, half month salary will be paid for each year of completed service up

to four (4) years plus three quarter month pay for each completed succeeding year of service.

Where termination is effective immediately, the employee will be paid in lieu of notice.

UTILITIES

3.01 Entitlement

Each MP is entitled to a monthly sum of $4,000.00 per month to defray costs of telephone, electricity and water charges (where applicable) in your Constituency Office.

3.02 Utility Requirements

(a) Members are required to make their Constituency Office telephone numbers available to the Office of the Parliament.

(b) Members must issue instructions to staff for the prudent use of the telephone.

(c) Members are advised against allowing utility accounts to fall into arrears.

(d) Should the relevant authorities terminate any of these services, payment to the Member will be terminated until the completion of necessary investigations by the Clerk of the House into the reasons for the termination of services.

(e) Members are required to maintain proper records of paid utility bills for inspection by the Office of the Parliament auditors.

(f) The IAU of the Office of the Parliament will provide book keeping advice, where necessary, to Members.

POSTAGE, STATIONERY/SUPPLIES AND JANITORIAL SERVICES

4.01 Entitlement

Each Member is entitled to a monthly allocation of $2,500.00 for postage, stationery, supplies, janitorial services and routine maintenance of Office Equipment.

4.02 Consideration when Utilizing Funds

Members are advised that under no circumstances will the Office of the Parliament provide postage, stationery/supplies and janitorial services. Therefore, funds provided must be utilised with appropriate consideration.

OFFICE EQUIPMENT

5.01 Entitlement

Each Member is entitled to a monthly allowance of $300.00 for routine maintenance of office equipment.

5.02 Repairs

(a) Requests for major repairs to computer equipment should be submitted to the Information Systems Department (ISD), Office of the Parliament.

(b) Request for repairs to other equipment such as photocopier, AC units etc. should be submitted to the ASU, Office of the Parliament.

5.03 Computer Equipment

(a) The Office of the Parliament will supply computers and printers as approved by the House Committee, and provide for training of staff in their appropriate use.

(b) Members are encouraged to ensure that staff who are permitted to use computer equipment must be proficient in the use of such equipment, and must read and agree to adhere to the computer usage policy.

(c) All computers supplied to Constituency Offices are of a standard configuration. Upon delivery to the Constituency Office, an equipment note prepared by the ISD will be presented to a representative of the Constituency Office. This note will contain all equipment and peripheral devices provided, as well as all installed software.

(d) All computers supplied to Constituency Offices will be equipped with standard installation software such as Microsoft Windows 7 or Operating Systems Microsoft Office 2013 productivity suite, WinRar Compression Software, Symantec Antivirus with the latest definition updates and Adobe Reader.

(e) The ISD is responsible only for the functionality of the software stated above. Members are requested to regularly update the antivirus definition files so as to ensure that the computers are virus free. Also, Members are responsible for the security of data contained on their assigned computer hard drive

(f) Members are responsible for the use, upkeep and maintenance of computers and peripheral devices, including the supplied printer, and should use the funds provided for the procurement of all consumables and other supplies needed.

(g) Where the repairs to the equipment include replacement of a component other than the keyboard, mouse or consumables, such repairs will be undertaken by the ISD.

(h) Equipment provided by the Office of the Parliament shall not be removed from Constituency Offices without the permission of the Clerk of the House.

(i) Equipment failure due to misuse or negligence may result in a protracted replacement period. Therefore, Members are encouraged to take steps to protect against the mishandling of Constituency equipment by staff members.

INTERNET SERVICES

6.01 Entitlement

(a) The Office of the Parliament will provide all main Constituency Offices with high speed internet service and an e-mail address – e.g. arima@ ttparliament.org

(b) Each Member will also be provided with individual e-mail address–e.g. jbrown@ttparliament.org.

6.02 Support

(a) Members are responsible for the security of internet devices. Should the device be stolen the Member should immediately contact the ISD and report the matter to the Police.

(b) Should internet services be disrupted the ISD should be contacted for technical support.

RESIDENTIAL PHONE/ CELLULAR PHONE

7.01 Entitlement

Each MP is entitled to a monthly allowance of $ 2,000.00 to offset the cost of his residential and/or cellular phone expenses.

7.02 Telephone Contact

Members are required to provide the Clerk of the House with an active residential and cellular telephone contact number.

OFFICE FURNITURE

8.01 Entitlement

Each MP is entitled to the provision of office furniture for their Constituency Office (see list attached)

8.02 Requirements

(a) Members should ensure that the furniture and equipment provided by the Office of the Parliament are safeguarded against theft, improper use and abuse in any form.

(b) Members should advise the ASU of any furniture and/or equipment that is obsolete, irreparable or not in use.

(c) Members are required to maintain a physical inventory of office furniture and equipment.

(d) Members may acquire, borrow, solicit and/or rent additional furniture and equipment for their Constituency Offices. In such circumstances a separate inventory, listing these items should kept.

(e) Office furniture which is the property of the Office of the Parliament must not be removed from Constituency Offices unless authorized by Clerk of the House.

(f) The Office of the Parliament is responsible for verifying the inventory of furniture and equipment.

CONSTITUENCY BANK ACCOUNT

9.01 Requirement

(a) A bank account must be established for each Constituency Office no later than September 30, 2015. The account must be in the name of the Constituency, for example- "The Constituency of La Brea".

(b) Details of the account must be submitted in writing to the Clerk of the House by October 31, 2015.

(c) Members shall ensure that-

(i) a proper system of accounting is maintained; and

(ii) the funds entrusted to their care are properly safeguarded and applied only to the purpose for which they are intended.

(d) Members are to be the sole signatory of the account and must not delegate this responsibility to any other individual.

(e) The Office of the Parliament will deposit the approved sums monthly into the designated Constituency Bank Account for the following services:

(i) Rent (where applicable);

(ii) Telephone and electricity;

(iii) Postage, stationery supplies and janitorial services;

(iv) Maintenance of office equipment; and

(v) Residential/cellular phones.

(f) Members are advised that rent and utility payments must be up to date and proper records with regard to such payment must be kept.

(g) The ASU will provide the necessary advice and direction on the maintenance of financial records.

(h) The IAU of the Office of the Parliament will provide necessary assistance, as may be required.

(i) Members are prohibited from co-mingling of funds received from the Office of the Parliament with funds received from any other source.

MISCELLANEOUS

10.01 Donations/Charity

No funds or items provided by the Office of the Parliament shall be donated or loaned to any person, cause or organization.

10.02 Petty Cash Payments

Members may refund staff for petty cash payments made against appropriated funds, e.g., purchase of stamps and cleaning items.

DISSOLUTION /INTERREGNUM

11.01 Staff

Constituency staff receive salary up to and including polling day. However staff should be put on dismissal notice at least one (1) week prior to nomination day, in the case of members not standing again. Such notices shall take the form of a dismissal letter, which will put the employee on formal notice of termination.

11.02 Constituency Office Arrangements

Once Parliament is dissolved, a Member's constitutional right to represent his constituents' grievances to government disappears. During this period parliamentary resources may be used only for the purpose of carrying out residual parliamentary functions. Only winding-up operations will be permitted during the interregnum and offices should not be used as a political campaign office.

11.03 Outstanding Utility Bills

Members must honour all outstanding bills (telephone, electricity, etc.) before vacating office.

11.04 Closing of Constituency Bank Accounts

Before vacating office, Constituency bank accounts should be closed and excess funds made payable by cheque or bank draft to the Clerk of the House.

OFFICE FURNITURE AND EQUIPMENT

Each MP is entitled to the under-mentioned furniture and equipment for his Constituency Office:

(1) Four (4) computers
(2) Two (2) printers
(3) one (1) photocopier
(4) one (1) facsimile (Fax) machine
(5) Sixty (60) straight back chairs
(6) six (6) desks
(7) two (2) stenographer chairs
(8) four(4) filing cabinets
(9) two (2) storage cupboards
(10) two (2) executive chairs
(11) two (2) waste paper baskets
(12) two (2) fans
(13) AC
(14) one (1) microwave oven
(15) one (1) regular size refrigerator
(16) one (1) computer work station
(17) one (1) shredder
(18) one (1) regular size conference table with chairs
(19) one (1) water dispenser

The following furniture/equipment are provided for sub-offices:

(1) one (1) computer
(2) AC
(3) twelve (12) straight back chairs
(4) two (2) desks
(5) one (1) stenographer chair
(6) one (1) executive chair
(7) one (1) filing cabinet

(8) one (1) waste paper basket
(9) one (1) fan
(10) one water dispenser

APPENDIX I- JOB DESCRIPTIONS

JOB TITLE: Office Manager	
RECOMMENDED SALARY RANGE: $10,000 - $15,000	
JOB SUMMARY: The incumbent is required to organise and coordinate Constituency Office operations and procedures, in order to ensure effectiveness, efficiency and safety. The ideal candidate will be experienced in handling a wide range of administrative and executive support related tasks and will be able to work independently with little or no supervision. The incumbent must be well organised, flexible and enjoy the administrative challenges of supporting an office of diverse people.	
REPORTS TO:	**Member of Parliament**
SUPERVISION GIVEN TO:	**All other Constituency Office Staff**
DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:	
▪ Manages and coordinates the arrangements for Member of Parliament including Parliamentary sittings, meetings, workshops, conferences and appointments with constituents, by providing logistical support including: – scheduling dates and arranging transport; – arranging accommodation; – following up the implementation of actions and decisions taken as required. • Monitors office expenditure. • Provides orientation and training for Constituency staff. • Plans, assigns and direct work of Constituency staff. • Monitors the Office's compliance with Constituency Handbook. • Liaises with the Office of the Parliament on Constituency Office matters. • Supervises the reception desk, administrative files and personnel records. • Assumes responsibility for overall office appearance and layout. • Performs other duties as required.	
KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES	
KNOWLEDGE	▪ Extensive knowledge of modern office practices

	and procedures. ▪ Extensive knowledge of office management principles and techniques. ▪ Basic knowledge of Industrial Relations principles, procedures and practices.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	▪ Ability to direct and lead staff engaged in the performance of clerical/secretarial and administrative support functions. ▪ Ability to use a computer and other standard office machines such as photocopiers, scanners, facsimile machines. ▪ Ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing. ▪ Ability to promote teamwork. ▪ Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with colleagues. ▪ Ability to interact positively with members of the public
MINIMUM EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING	
• Minimum of three (3) years' experience performing clerical/secretarial and administrative support duties, including a minimum of one (1) year at a supervisory level; or • Minimum of one (1) year of office management experience.	

JOB TITLE: Driver/Messenger	
RECOMMENDED SALARY: $5,700	
JOB SUMMARY: The incumbent is required to provide reliable and safe driving services for the transportation of personnel and/or materials/equipment and to perform messengerial duties such as collecting and delivering mail, documents, stored and other supplies. Duties also include the routine maintenance of the vehicle and operating standard office equipment.	
REPORTS TO:	**Office Manager**
SUPERVISION GIVEN TO:	**N/A**
DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:	
• Drives vehicle to transport the Member of Parliament and other Constituency Office staff to/from office meetings, seminars, workshops and functions and collects and delivers mail, equipment, furniture, office supplies and other items. • Cleans vehicle and checks for essentials such as gas, oil, water and tyre pressure and makes entries in log book concerning trips, purpose of same, mileage, fuel and any delays occurring on the road. • Performs minor emergency repairs to vehicle on the road but reports to the Office Manager any major defects in vehicle. • Assists in loading and unloading vehicle when necessary. • Performs basic office support duties such as operating standard office equipment such as photocopiers, scanners and facsimile machines. • Collects, sorts and distributes incoming mail, documents, packages and other materials. • Delivers, sorts and stamps outgoing mail and makes appropriate entries in register. • Collects, packs and sorts and distributes stationery, office supplies and equipment. • Performs other duties as required.	
KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES	
KNOWLEDGE	• Knowledge of the principles of automotive operations sufficient to detect defects in operations. • Knowledge of Trinidad and Tobago's road networks

	and locations of Government Ministries, Department and other agencies.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	• Skilled in the safe operations of a light motor vehicle. • Ability to understand simple written and oral instructions. • Ability to operate standard office equipment such as photocopiers, facsimile machines, scanners and binders. • Ability to maintain confidentiality. • Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with fellow employees and members of the public. • Ability to perform routine vehicular maintenance.

MINIMUM EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING

- Minimum three (3) years' experience in driving a motor/light goods vehicle.
- Possession of a valid Trinidad and Tobago Driver's Permit.
- Possession of a Police Certificate of Good Character.

JOB TITLE: Administrative Assistant	
RECOMMENDED SALARY RANGE: $5,000 - $6,300 (full time)	
JOB SUMMARY: The incumbent is required to perform a variety of clerical/secretarial and administrative support duties of limited complexity. Work involves assisting in the planning and management of meetings; opening, sorting and routing of mail; maintaining records and files and generating a wide variety of documents utilising appropriate software.	
REPORTS TO:	**Office Manager**
SUPERVISION GIVEN TO:	**N/A**
DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:	
• Maintains file register and filing system in keeping with established systems and procedures. • Receives, records, sorts and routes incoming and outgoing correspondence and other documents. • Composes and issues routine correspondence; also prepares drafts of more complex correspondence and reports of meetings, conferences etc. as directed. • Orders, issues, and maintains inventory of supplies and equipment. • Attends to queries and ascertains the business of callers and constituents and guides them accordingly. • Operates standard office equipment such as photocopiers, scanners, facsimile machines and binders. • Undertakes basic information gathering, as directed, and compiles data for entry; enters and/ or verifies data. • Performs other duties as required.	
KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES	
KNOWLEDGE	▪ Knowledge of modern office practices and procedures.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	▪ Proficiency in the use of Microsoft Office Suite.

	▪ Ability to use the internet for research purposes. ▪ Ability to compose and prepare documents such as letters, memoranda, minutes and reports. ▪ Ability to learn assigned tasks of limited complexity and variety readily. ▪ Ability to make arithmetical computations. ▪ Ability to use a computer and other standard office machines such as photocopiers, scanners and facsimile machines. ▪ Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing. ▪ Ability to work as part of a team. ▪ Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with colleagues and to interact positively with members of the public
MINIMUM EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING	
• Five (5) CXC/GCE O Level passes including English Language and Mathematics; or • A minimum of (6) months experience performing office support duties and a minimum of three (3) CXC/GCE O'Level passes including English Language.	

JOB TITLE: Research Officer/Research Assistant	
RECOMMENDED SALARY RANGE: $10,000 - $15,000	
JOB SUMMARY: The incumbent is required to use the Parliament Library, other libraries, the internet and other research resources to provide effective, efficient and professional information to the Member of Parliament. The incumbent is also required to liaise with staff of the Office of the Parliament, with government and its agencies, and the broader research community in the provision of this service so that Members are able to effectively discharge their parliamentary duties.	
REPORTS TO:	**Member of Parliament**
SUPERVISION GIVEN TO:	**N/A**
DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:	
▪ Respond to enquiries from constituents, other Members of Parliament and the media. ▪ Conduct field work on behalf of the Member, including visiting and interviewing constituents and accompanying the Member to official functions, meetings and sittings of Parliament. ▪ Assist with the management of the Member's schedule, making travel arrangements and taking minutes at meetings. ▪ Write press releases and speeches for the Member of Parliament. ▪ Provide guidance and research on legislation being debated in Parliament or matters before Committees. ▪ Draft questions and motions for the Member. ▪ Performs other duties as required.	
KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES	
KNOWLEDGE	▪ Considerable knowledge of legal research principles and techniques. ▪ Knowledge of the Laws of Trinidad and Tobago.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	▪ Proficiency in the use of Microsoft Office Suite. ▪ Skill in the use of personal computers. ▪ Ability to use the internet for research purposes. ▪ Ability to conduct legal research work of varying

	complexity. ▪ Ability to analyse and interpret legislation or other issues orally and in writing. ▪ Ability to maintain confidentiality. ▪ Ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships with fellow employees and members of the public.
MINIMUM EXPERIENCE AND TRAINING	
• Training as evidenced by the possession of a recognized University Degree from a recognized institution.	

APPENDIX II- SAMPLE LETTERS

SAMPLE LETTER: Offer of Employment

Date
Employee's Name

Employee's Address/ mailing address

Re: Job Offer for the position of _____

Dear _____,

Thank you for your application in response to the advertised position of _____ and your subsequent attendance at the interview.

I am pleased to inform you that you have been selected for the position of _____, in the _____Constituency Office. You are kindly asked to report to our offices on _____. You will be based in the Constituency Main Office and will report to Mrs Y, the Office Manager.

The salary for this position is $_____ monthly. The hours of work shall be 8am to 4pm Monday to Thursday with a one (1) hour lunch break. Please be advised that although you are not required to work on public holidays or weekends, from time to time Constituency events may be scheduled to take place on such days. In those circumstances you will be allowed compensatory time off.

I look forward to you being a member of our team.

Yours Sincerely,_____

Mr. R,
MP for _____

I accept the terms of condition outlined in the offer letter and confirm that I am able to commence employment on _____

Printed Name:
Signature:
Date:

SAMPLE: Contract of Employment for Constituency Office Staff

Contract of Employment

This agreement is made on the _____ day of _____, between _____, Member of Parliament for _____ (hereinafter referred to as the Employer), Constituency Office of the Member of Parliament for _____ of _____ and _____ (hereinafter referred to as the Employee) of _____.

In consideration of the terms and conditions hereunder and for other good and valuable consideration (the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged), the parties agree as follows:

Duties of Employee: [Include duties of the employee relative to job title].

Term of Contract: The Employee shall be engaged for a period of _____ years/months from the _____ to the _____.

Salary: The Employee shall receive $_____ per month for the duration of the contract. Such salary shall be subject to deductions for Income Tax (**where applicable**), Health

	Surcharge, National Insurance contributions and all other taxes that may become payable during the term of this Contract.
Working Hours:	Monday to Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with one hour lunch period between the hours of 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Vacation Leave	(Where applicable) Ten (10) working days per annum: 1 – 3 years' service; Fifteen (15) working days per annum: 3 – 6 years' service; Twenty (20) working days per annum: 6 years' service and over.
Sick/Emergency Leave:	After six (6) months continuous service, fourteen (14) working days per annum with full pay. Any leave taken in

	excess of the stated sick/emergency leave, would be treated as leave without pay. A period not exceeding two (2) days may be taken without a medical certificate. For any absence exceeding two days, the Employee shall furnish to the Employer a medical certificate written under the hand of a duly qualified and registered Medical Practitioner.
Maternity Leave:	(Where applicable) After twelve (12) continuous months of service, three (3) months with pay, computed by the difference between the salary currently received and such maternity benefits receivable under the National Insurance Act.

Termination of Services: Services may be terminated by either party after notice is given in writing, one (1) month in advance.

_____ _____

[Employee Name] Date

_____ _____

Member of Parliament
Date

SAMPLE LETTER: First Written Warning

Date
Employee's Name

Employee's Address/ mailing address
Dear [Insert Employee Name]

Re: Disciplinary Action – Written Warning

You will recall that on [Date] you were informed that if there was no improvement in [insert unsatisfactory conduct/job performance], a written warning would be issued to you.

This letter serves as a written warning for [unsatisfactory conduct/job performance] which will be placed in your file.

[Insert details of the following]

(a) The nature of the unsatisfactory conduct/performance was: [Insert Details].
(b) The conduct/performance improvement expected is: [Insert Details].
(c) The date within which improvement is required is: [Insert Details].

[A date for a feedback meeting may be proposed to review the employee's progress.]

The consequence of further misconduct/insufficient improvement is a final written warning.

Yours sincerely,

_____

[Member of Parliament/Office Manager]

SAMPLE LETTER: Final Written Warning

Date
Employee's Name

Employee's Address/ mailing address

Dear [Insert Employee Name]

Re: Disciplinary Action – Final Written Warning

I am writing to you regarding your [performance/conduct] during your employment at the Constituency Office of [Insert].

[Detail employee's disciplinary history: all verbal/written warnings]

Example:

A written warning was issued on [Date] which detailed:

(a) The nature of the unsatisfactory conduct/performance [Insert Details].
(b) The conduct/performance improvement expected [Insert Details].
(c) The timescale within which improvement is required [Insert Details].

This is a final warning letter. Further misconduct/insufficient improvement will result in the immediate termination of your employment. Yours sincerely,

_____

[Member of Parliament/Office Manager]

SAMPLE LETTER: Termination of Employment (for cause)

Date
Employee's Name

Employee's Address/ mailing address

Dear [Insert Employee Name]

Re: Termination of Employment

Your employment with the Constituency Office of [Insert name] is hereby terminated. I refer to the following warnings regarding your [performance/conduct].

Letter dated (insert date) which detailed:

(a) The nature of the unsatisfactory conduct/performance [Insert Details].
(b) The conduct/performance improvement expected [Insert Details].
(c) The timescale within which improvement is required [Insert Details].

You were advised that failure to improve conduct/performance standards would result in a final warning.

You were issued a final warning by letter dated (insert date) and you were then advised that immediate termination of your employment would result if you failed to significantly improve your [performance/conduct] in the areas identified. I have therefore taken

the decision to terminate your employment for [poor performance/misconduct].The arrangements in respect of your dismissal are:

(a) Your dismissal is effective from [Insert Termination Date].
(b) [Where termination is effective immediately, give details of payment in lieu of notice].
(c) You are required to return [Office ID/Keys/Equipment etc].

If you have any queries, please contact [Office Manager/Relevant Constituency Staff Member] at xxx-xxxx.

Yours sincerely,

_____

[Member of Parliament/Office Manager]

SAMPLE LETTER: Termination of Employment

Date
Employee's Name

Employee's Address/ mailing address

Dear [Insert Employee Name]

Re: Termination of Employment

I wish to advise that your employment with the Constituency Office of [Insert name] will be terminated with effect from [insert date].

As a consequence, you will be paid your salary up to [insert date] and severance benefits which will be determined according to the duration of your service as follows: [insert as appropriate]

[Where service is for more than one (1) year but less than five (5) years, a severance of half month salary will be paid for each year completed; or

[Where service is for five (5) years and over, half month salary will be paid for each year of completed service up to four (4) years plus three quarter month pay for each completed succeeding year of service]; or

[Where termination is effective immediately, give details of payment in lieu of notice].

You are required to return [Office ID/Keys/Equipment etc] by [insert date].

I wish to thank you for your contribution during your period of employment. If you have any queries, please contact [Office Manager/Relevant Constituency Staff Member] at xxx-xxxx.

Yours sincerely,

_____

[Member of Parliament/Office Manager]

APPENDIX III- CONSTITUENCY EMPLOYMENT DATA FORM

OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENT

CONSTITUENCY EMPLOYEE PERSONAL DATA FORM

CONSTITUENCY:.....
.....
NAME OF EMPLOYEE:
Surname
First Name
MAILING ADDRESS:

TELEPHONECONTACT:.....
.....
EMAIL ADDRESS:.....
.....
DATE OF BIRTH: .....DATE OF EMPLOYMENT.....

N.I.S NUMBER: ……B.I.R. NUMBER: ……

NEXT OF KIN:

Surname First Name

MAILING ADDRESS OF NEXT OF KIN:

TELEPHONE CONTACT OF NEXT Of KIN……

JOB FUNCTION:……

BANK ACCOUNT NO.:……

MONTHLY SALARY:……

The employee named herein is to be paid as directed until further notice.

Signature of Member: ……Date: …….

August 18, 2015

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