

**EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT FOR
PROBATE COURT STAFF ATTORNEY**

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into this 22nd day of October, 2026, by and among the Honorable Patty Walters Laine, **PROBATE JUDGE OF HALL COUNTY, GEORGIA**, hereinafter referred to as the "Probate Judge," **NIA EVERETEZE**, herein referred to as the "Employee", and **HALL COUNTY, GEORGIA**, hereinafter referred to as the "County," and all of whom agree as follows:

WITNESSETH

WHEREAS, the Probate Judge possesses the authority to appoint, supervise, and remove the Staff Attorney of the Hall County Probate Court and desires to employ the Employee as Staff Attorney to the Hall County Probate Court; and

WHEREAS, the Employee desires to accept such employment and to perform legal, judicial, administrative, advisory, and related services for the Probate Court; and

WHEREAS, the County desires to approve the employment of the Employee as the Staff Attorney to the Hall County Probate Court upon the terms set forth herein and to provide the compensation and benefits provided under this Agreement; and

WHEREAS, in consideration of the employment, compensation, benefits, and other terms and conditions provided under this Agreement, the Employee desires to accept employment pursuant to the terms of this Agreement in lieu of membership in the Hall County Civil Service System; and

WHEREAS, the parties acknowledge that this Agreement is intended to constitute a contractual employment agreement pursuant to Section II of the Hall County Civil Service Act and to create a contractual employment relationship exempt from the Hall County Civil Service System;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants contained herein, the parties agree as follows:

SECTION 1. Employment

The Probate Judge hereby employs the Employee as Staff Attorney to the Hall County Probate Court, and the Employee hereby accepts such employment, upon the terms and conditions set forth herein. The Employee shall be a full-time employee assigned to the Hall County Probate Court and shall perform such legal, judicial, administrative, advisory, and/or related duties, functions, and assignments as may be specified and assigned by the Probate Judge.

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In the performance of such duties, functions, and assignments, the Employee shall exercise independent professional judgment consistent with applicable law, ethical obligations, and any policies and procedures applicable to the Hall County Probate Court.

The Probate Judge shall possess the authority to direct, supervise, and control the Employee's work and, subject to applicable law and the terms of this Agreement, to suspend, discipline, or terminate the Employee. Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to confer upon the County Administrator or the Hall County Board of Commissioners authority to direct the Employee's work or to appoint, supervise, discipline, or remove the Employee.

SECTION 2. Term of Employment; Exempt Status

A. This Agreement shall commence on the Effective Date and shall continue until terminated as provided herein.

The parties acknowledge and agree that this Agreement is entered into pursuant to Section II of the Hall County Civil Service Act, Chapter 2.120 of the Official Code of Hall County, as amended from time to time, and is intended to satisfy the requirements thereof for establishing a contractual employment relationship exempt from the Hall County Civil Service System.

The Employee acknowledges and agrees that she accepts employment pursuant to this individual employment agreement in lieu of membership in the Hall County Civil Service System. The Employee further acknowledges and agrees that she is not a civil service employee and does not possess any rights, protections, grievance procedures, hearing rights, appeal rights, or other benefits afforded under the Hall County Civil Service Act. The Employee further acknowledges that she possesses no property interest in continued employment with Hall County or the Hall County Probate Court.

Unless otherwise required by law, the Employee serves at the pleasure of the Probate Judge and may be terminated, removed, suspended, reassigned, demoted, or otherwise separated from employment by the Probate Judge at any time, with or without cause and with or without notice.

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Nothing contained herein shall be construed as creating a guarantee of employment for any specific duration.

B. Nothing in this Agreement shall prevent, limit, or otherwise interfere with the right of the Employee to resign from employment at any time.

SECTION 3. Termination

A. The Probate Judge may terminate this Agreement and the Employee's employment at any time, with or without cause and with or without notice, subject only to applicable law.

B. The Employee may resign at any time. In the event the Employee voluntarily resigns her position, the Employee agrees to provide at least thirty (30) days written notice of resignation whenever reasonably practicable unless otherwise agreed by the Probate Judge.

C. Upon termination of employment, the Employee shall be entitled only to compensation and benefits earned and accrued through the effective date of separation as provided by applicable law and County policy. The Employee shall not be entitled to severance pay, separation pay, liquidated damages, future compensation, or any other post-employment compensation unless expressly authorized by separate written action or agreement of the Hall County Board of Commissioners.

SECTION 4. Compensation and Benefits

The County agrees to pay the Employee for her services rendered pursuant to this Agreement an annual base salary of \$ 85,000.00, payable in installments at the same time as other employees of the County are paid, subject to budgetary appropriations and any lawful cost-reduction measures adopted by the County. The Employee's compensation may be adjusted from time to time pursuant to County budgetary actions, compensation plans, personnel policies, cost-of-living adjustments, merit increases, or other lawful actions of the County. The County further agrees to provide employee benefits to the Employee in accordance with County policies, employee benefit plans, and applicable law, as such policies and plans may be amended from time to time.

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Nothing in this Section shall be construed to authorize an arbitrary reduction in the Employee's individual compensation or to limit the Probate Judge's authority to make compensation recommendations for the Employee within the Probate Court's approved budget, subject to any approval or appropriation required by law or County policy.

SECTION 5. Political Activity

A. If the Employee becomes a candidate for elective office and such candidacy creates an actual or potential conflict of interest with the Employee's official duties, materially interferes with the Employee's ability to perform the duties of the position, or is otherwise prohibited by applicable law, ethical obligations, or County policy, the Employee shall promptly notify the Probate Judge. The Probate Judge may require the Employee to resign, take a leave of absence, recuse herself from certain matters, or take such other action as may be necessary to address the conflict or comply with applicable law, ethical obligations, or County policy.

B. During the term of this Agreement, the Employee shall not:

- (1) Engage in political activity that creates an actual conflict of interest with the Employee's official duties;
- (2) Knowingly solicit, accept, or receive political contributions in violation of law;
- (3) Use or attempt to use official authority, County resources, or official influence to affect the outcome of an election or political campaign; or
- (4) Engage in any political activity prohibited by applicable law, County policy, the Georgia Rules of Professional Conduct, or other ethical rules applicable to the Employee.

SECTION 6. Professional Dues, Subscriptions and Professional Development

A. Subject to budgetary appropriations and approval by the Probate Judge, the County agrees to pay the Employee's annual bar dues, professional membership dues, subscription costs, continuing legal education expenses, and seminar expenses incurred by the Employee in connection with the Employee's duties.

B. Subject to budgetary appropriations and approval by the Probate Judge, the County may

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pay or reimburse reasonable travel, lodging, meals, registration fees, and related expenses incurred in connection with official Probate Court business or professional development activities.

SECTION 7. Professional Licensure and Ethical Obligations

A. As a condition of employment, the Employee shall maintain all licenses, qualifications, certifications, and other credentials required by law or by the Probate Judge for the Staff Attorney position. If the position requires admission to the practice of law in the State of Georgia, the Employee shall remain duly licensed and in good standing with the State Bar of Georgia throughout the term of employment.

B. The Employee shall promptly notify the Probate Judge of any disciplinary complaint, grievance, suspension, disbarment, administrative suspension, criminal charge, criminal conviction, or other matter that may materially affect the Employee's ability to perform the duties of the position or maintain any required professional license, qualification, certification, or credential.

C. The Employee shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, the Georgia Rules of Professional Conduct, County policies applicable to the Employee, any policies and procedures of the Hall County Probate Court, and all ethical obligations associated with the position.

D. The loss, suspension, expiration, revocation, or failure to maintain any license, qualification, certification, or legal authority required for the performance of the Employee's duties may constitute grounds for disciplinary action by the Probate Judge, including immediate termination of employment.

SECTION 8. Confidentiality

The Employee acknowledges that, during the course of employment, she may have access to confidential, privileged, sensitive, or otherwise non-public information, including but not limited to personnel records, protected personal information, law enforcement information, court records, information maintained in County or Probate Court information systems, and other information

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exempt from public disclosure under applicable law.

The Employee shall maintain the confidentiality of such information and shall not disclose, use, copy, remove, or permit the disclosure of such information except as necessary in the performance of official duties or as authorized or required by applicable law, court order, ethical obligation, or applicable official policy.

Nothing in this Agreement shall be construed to authorize the disclosure of information protected by the attorney-client privilege, work-product doctrine, judicial confidentiality requirements, statutory confidentiality provisions, or other legal protections.

Upon separation from employment, the Employee shall return all Probate Court and County records, files, documents, electronically stored information, equipment, and other property in the Employee's possession or control, subject to any applicable record retention requirements.

The obligations contained in this Section shall survive the termination of employment and shall remain enforceable to the fullest extent permitted by law.

SECTION 9. Defense and Indemnification

The County shall defend, indemnify, and hold harmless the Employee to the extent provided by and subject to the terms, conditions, limitations, exclusions, and requirements set forth in the Hall County Defense and Indemnification Ordinance, as amended from time to time.

Nothing contained in this Agreement shall be construed to create any independent right to defense, indemnification, reimbursement, insurance coverage, or payment of attorneys' fees beyond those rights, if any, provided by applicable law or the Hall County Defense and Indemnification Ordinance.

Nothing contained herein shall expand, diminish, waive, or modify any rights, immunities, defenses, limitations, or obligations established by applicable law or County ordinance.

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SECTION 10. General Provisions

A. Entire Agreement. This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the parties concerning the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior negotiations, representations, understandings, and agreements. Any amendment hereto must be in writing and executed by the parties.

B. Severability. If any provision of this Agreement, or any portion thereof, is later determined by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, the remaining provisions of this Agreement shall remain in full force and effect to the fullest extent permitted by law.

C. Governing Law. This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia.

D. Effective Date. This Agreement shall become effective on the 22nd day of October, 2026, and shall remain in effect until terminated in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

E. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have executed this Agreement on the date first written above.

[SIGNATURES ON FOLLOWING PAGE]

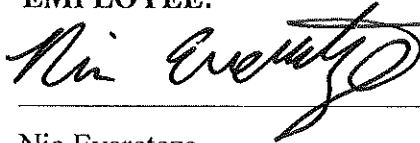
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PROBATE JUDGE OF HALL COUNTY, GEORGIA



Honorable Patty Walters Laine, Judge
Probate Court of Hall County

EMPLOYEE:



Nia Evereteze

HALL COUNTY, GEORGIA

John T. Gentry, Jr., Interim County Administrator

ATTEST:

(SEAL)
Jennifer Rivera
County Commission Clerk

APPROVAL AS TO FORM:

Justin R. Lawhon, County Attorney