

Columbus State University

Shared Sick Leave Program

PURPOSE:

The Columbus State University Shared Sick Leave Program is designed to provide assistance to employees who have exhausted or anticipate exhausting paid leave due to catastrophic or life threatening medical needs of the employee as defined in this policy.

PROCEDURE:

Employees of Columbus State University (CSU) may donate sick leave to the Shared Leave Pool. The donation of leave is voluntary and may be made at anytime during the annual benefits open enrollment period. All donations are irrevocable. Donations to the Shared Leave Pool are submitted to the Human Resources Department.

Donated leave can only be used by recipients who have or will exhaust paid leave for absences due to catastrophic or life threatening medical needs as defined in this policy.

Making a Donation

To be eligible to donate leave, a donor must be a CSU employee continuously employed for at least six months in a benefits eligible position. Donors are required to maintain a combined total of at least forty (40) hours sick and annual leave after donation; in order to ensure adequate remaining leave for the donor, donors are advised to maintain a balance of at least eighty (80) hours of sick and annual leave after donation.

Leave Donation Authorization Forms are available in Human Resources and will be used to donate leave. Leave donations must be made in eight (8) hour increments. The minimum donation is eight (8) hours.

Human Resources maintains the leave records for the donor and the Shared Leave Pool.

Request for Leave

To be eligible to submit requests for leave donations, a CSU employee must have been continuously employed by CSU for at least six (6) months in a position entitled to earn and use leave; and must exhaust or anticipate exhaustion of paid leave for absences due to catastrophic or life threatening medical needs as defined in this policy. Employees may not request leave for illnesses for which Workers' Compensation, Social Security or Long Term Disability benefits may be received.

Recipients will use donated leave ONLY for unpaid absences due to catastrophic or life threatening medical needs as defined in this policy.

A potential leave recipient may request up to 160 hours of Shared Leave at one time, and may make up to two additional requests for shared leave within a calendar year, for a maximum total of 480 hours per year within a five year period. The requests may be consecutive.

Employees may request leave donations no more than thirty (30) calendar days prior to going on authorized leave. Requests must be submitted in writing by the employee to Human Resources and must describe the reason for requesting donated leave and include a medical statement (or other documentation) supporting the need for absence. Human Resources will notify the employee's supervisor of the request but not the reason for the request.

NOTE: The medical information contained in the statement must be considered confidential and is to be shared with individuals only on a "need to know" basis. The statement is to be maintained in a confidential file separate from the employee's personnel file.

The request will be reviewed for approval by the Donated Leave Certification Committee which will consist of the Director of Human Resources, the Benefits Manager and Employment Manager, or appropriate designees if necessary. If denied at this level, the request may be appealed. Appeals will be forwarded to the Vice President for Business and Finance.

Note: Funding limitations may impact eligibility and participation.

Confidentiality

The identity of donors is confidential and will not be provided to the recipient or to any other individual.

Crediting Donated Leave to an Approved Employee

All types of leave donations, up to a maximum of 160 hours, will be credited as sick leave to a recipient, and on an as needed basis.

While using donated leave, the recipient will accrue annual and sick leave. This newly accrued leave must be used prior to continuing to use donated leave.

The recipient will be advised in writing by the Director of Human Resources or designee, of the amount of leave donated.

Placement on Family Leave

An eligible employee who is using donated leave must be placed on available family leave (Family Medical Leave), unless or until the twelve (12) work weeks of family leave has been used for the 12 month period.

Pursuant to Regents' policy and federal law, an employee may be placed on family leave without a request from the employee.

If an employee receives more than 40 consecutive hours of donated leave due to personal illness or disability, a statement from the attending health care provider that releases the employee to return to work will be required.

The release statement must indicate that the employee is able to return to work and perform the essential functions of the job with or without reasonable accommodation.

This release statement must be submitted to the employee's supervisor immediately upon return to work.

Sunset Provision:

Since this is a new policy for CSU, this document will be reviewed and revised as necessary at the end of one year, and again at the end of a two year period to confirm continuation of the program. If continued at the end of the two year period the program will then be reviewed annually.

Exceptions:

Exceptions may be made only with the approval of the Vice President for Business and Finance and the President.

Definitions

Catastrophic personal injury or illness

A severe condition or combination of conditions affecting the mental or physical health of an employee and has had a major impact on life functions.

Life-threatening or emergency medical condition

Means a health condition involving a serious, extreme, or life-threatening illness, injury, impairment, or condition that is likely to require an employee's absence from duty for a period of time longer than the amount of sick and annual leave available to the employee, and the health condition is such that it is not medically appropriate for the employee to delay the absence in order to accrue additional sick or annual leave prior to the absence. Some examples of such conditions include: advanced or rapidly growing cancers, acute life-threatening illnesses, chronic life-threatening conditions in need of immediate care, life-threatening infections, severe injuries arising from automobile or other serious accidents and severe or life-threatening conditions involving failure of bodily organs or systems (e.g., heart attack). The absence may be continuous, as in hospitalization following surgery or an accident, or intermittent, as in periodic absences for chemotherapy or other procedures.

