



Administrative Policy
Disaster Leave Sharing Program

A.P. No.	A.P 3-17
Effective Date:	1/1/2021

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The City of Houston recognizes that employees may be affected by a disaster resulting in a need for time off in excess of their available accrued leave; therefore it is the policy of the City of Houston to allow employees to confidentially volunteer to donate a portion of their accrued vacation balance to a leave sharing program to be used by other eligible employees who have been affected by a disaster and have exhausted (or will exhaust) all of their personal accrued leave hours to which they are entitled.

2. POLICY PURPOSE

This policy is to provide a program through which City of Houston employees may financially assist other City of Houston employees, who have been affected by a disaster, through the donation of their accrued vacation hours to a leave sharing program.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to all City of Houston employees.

4. DEFINITIONS

Disaster: The occurrence or threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, or loss of life or property resulting from any natural or man-made cause, including fire, flood, earthquake, wind, storm, wave action, oil spill or other water contamination, volcanic activity, epidemic, pandemic, air contamination, blight, drought, infestation, explosion, riot, hostile military or paramilitary action, other public calamity requiring emergency action or emergency. Disaster also has the meaning ascribed in Section 418.004 of the Texas Government Code, as amended from time to time.

Eligible employee: An employee employed by the City of Houston who meets the criteria established in the Disaster Leave Sharing Program ("Program") Activation notice.

5. POLICY DETAILS

- 5.1. This policy may be activated at the sole discretion of the Mayor, upon a disaster declaration which encompasses the City of Houston's local region.
- 5.2. Upon activation of this policy, the Human Resources Department Director ("HR Director") shall send a broadcast email to employees which shall include additional information on recipient eligibility specific to that disaster and how to participate in the Program as a donor or a recipient.
- 5.3. All vacation hours donated must be currently accrued and available for immediate withdrawal at the time the donation is made.
- 5.4. The donation of accrued vacation hours to the Program is voluntary and irrevocable.
- 5.5. Only accrued vacation hours donated by employees shall be used to fund the Program.

Approved:

Handwritten signature of Sylvia Turner.

Date Approved:

4/5/2021

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- 5.6. Donated accrued vacation hours will be converted from hours to the donor's hourly rate, which will then be credited to the Program account for future use by eligible employees affected by a disaster.
- 5.7. Donated accrued vacation hours will be credited to eligible employee as disaster leave hours and coded in the recipient's official time records as DVDL.
- 5.8. Donated vacation hours will be used after all eligible accrued hours are exhausted, including sick, vacation, personal hours, compensatory time, floating holiday, and any other leave to which an employee is entitled.
- 5.9. Donated hours shall not exceed one-half of the donor's current vacation leave balance.
- 5.10. Donated hours shall be in one (1) hour increments.
- 5.11. While a recipient of the Program is absent and using leave from this program, sick and vacation hours will not continue to accrue.
- 5.12. When absent and using leave from the Program, an employee is entitled to receive pay for a City holiday he/she is paid for the day before and the day after the holiday.
- 5.13. The Mayor shall determine the maximum disaster leave allotted under this Program at the time of activation.
- 5.14. Disaster leave hours shall be paid on the biweekly payroll schedule.
- 5.15. Disaster leave hours will be credited to a eligible employee based on the available balance of the Program account and the period of absence.
- 5.16. Disaster leave hours will be processed in the order they were received and only completed approved applications will be submitted for payment from the Program account on a first come first serve basis.
- 5.17. Any employee who has been determined by the City (i.e., HR Director or the Office of the Inspector General) to have received leave under the Program fraudulently shall be subject to corrective action up to and including indefinite suspension or termination and shall be responsible for repaying the City for any fraudulent leave payment received, which may include a repayment plan.

6. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 6.1. The HR (or designee) shall be responsible for:
 - 6.1.1. Approving all communication and required forms regarding the Program;
 - 6.1.2. Approving and/or denying Program applications;
 - 6.1.3. Implementing any additional guidelines or procedures to facilitate the Program, if needed; and
 - 6.1.4. Periodically, notifying the Mayor of the balance of the Program.
- 6.2. Eligible employees will be responsible for completing an application, with supporting documentation, if required, to avail themselves of the Program.

7. PROCEDURES

- 7.1. Funding of the Program shall be administered using the following process:

- 7.1.1. Any eligible employee who has been employed by the City for at least one year, at the time of donation, may submit in writing (format approved by the HR Director) a request to donate one or more hours of their own accrued vacation leave and credit the equivalent cash value of such leave to the Program account, during the activation of the Program; and
- 7.1.2. Program donation forms shall be submitted by eligible employees to their Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department's Payroll representative.

7.2. In order to be a recipient of the Program, the following process shall be followed:

- 7.2.1. Eligible employees shall complete an application for the Program and submit the completed application along with any required supporting documentation to disaster_leave@houston.tx.gov;
- 7.2.2. Upon receipt of the application, the HR representative shall:
 - 7.2.2.1. Determine eligibility of the requesting employee;
 - 7.2.2.2. Notify the requesting employee of eligibility, as soon as practicable; and
 - 7.2.2.3. Ensure sufficient supporting documentation, if any, has been submitted for leave available under the Program;
- 7.2.3. If supporting documentation is required and the employee submits insufficient documentation, the HR representative shall notify the employee, as soon as practicable, and provide any other information on available resource;
- 7.2.4. After the employee is deemed eligible and required supporting documentation, if any, has been submitted, the HR representative shall calculate the cash value of the leave being requested and determine if the Program account has sufficient funds to pay the entire or a portion of the requested leave;
- 7.2.5. If sufficient funds are available to pay all or a portion of the recipient's leave request, then the HR representative shall prepare the Program packet for the HR Director's review;
- 7.2.6. If the Program packet is approved by the HR Director, the HR representative shall forward the necessary correspondence to the Administration and Regulatory Affairs Department's representative for processing and send the recipient notification of the approval;
- 7.2.7. If the Program packet is denied approval by the HR Director, the HR representative shall forward the necessary correspondence to the recipient notifying them of the denial.

8. POLICY SPONSOR

Department: Human Resources Department