



Santa Rosa County Human Resources

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Memorandum

To: Santa Rosa County Board of Commissioners

From: DeVann Cook, Director, Human Resources

Through: Tony Gomillion, County Administrator

Re: Sick Leave Pool

Date: April 4, 2016

RECOMMENDATION

Adopt a Sick Leave Pool program, eliminating the current Donated Leave Policy (80-10 Section XVIII).

BACKGROUND

The current Donated Leave Policy is not part of the original Civil Service Act. Our research indicates it was added to the Civil Service policies in the late 1980's. Over the years, what was once a policy that assisted employees with major, life-threatening illnesses or injuries, became a fall-back plan for employees that abused their leave time. There have been several unsuccessful attempts to convert to the Sick Leave Pool concept. After the last unsuccessful attempt, the Board did approve adding some language that required more medical documentation and restricted the use of the policy to more serious illnesses or injuries. Even with those changes, we have seen a continued increase in the abuse of the policy, primarily by employees that squander their earned Sick and Annual leave and then fall back on the donations of others when they are ill or injured.

Recently we had complaints from one group of employees because one of their co-workers was going around the offices and pressuring them to donate leave. This employee had worked here

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for over 25 years and these employees knew that the requests were due to poor management of earned leave.

The recommended Sick Leave Pool program is a proven model that is used by several other local governmental agencies in our area and the State of Florida. I have attached a sample policy to this memo, but the basic premise is that employees that join the Pool contribute 8 hours of their leave, every year to the Pool. This entitles them to be a member and access additional leave, if they become seriously ill or injured.

I have spoken with all of the other constitutional officers. They either support the change or have stated they have no objection.

Santa Rosa County
Employees' Sick Leave Pool

- A. Any full-time employee who has completed one continuous year of employment with Santa Rosa County and who has a minimum of eighty hours of accumulated sick or annual leave at the beginning of the fiscal year may participate in the Sick Leave Pool. However, an applicant must meet all requirements, as otherwise stated in this agreement, and must apply on an approved form. Participation in the Pool is voluntary.
- B. All participants in the Sick Leave Pool shall contribute eight hours of accrued sick leave to the Pool during the month of October. During the initial year, eligibility for participation shall be extended sixty days beyond the date this agreement is adopted.
- C. Any sick leave contributed to the Pool shall be deducted from the balance reflected on the employee's official sick leave record.
- D. Sick leave credit, up to 480 hours (lifetime), may be granted to a participating employee at the discretion and upon the authority of the Sick Leave Pool Committee after consideration by the Committee of all outstanding eligible applications. Any sick leave awarded from the Sick Leave Pool to a participating employee shall be used for absence due to the employee's personal illness, accident, or injury.
- E. A participating employee may be eligible for sick leave from the Pool only after having met the following conditions:
1. Has used all of his/her accumulated sick leave, annual leave and compensatory time.
 2. Is not eligible for Workers' Compensation pay.
 3. Is not eligible for injury in line-of-duty pay as granted by rule of the County.
 4. Has been without pay for three consecutive working days.
 5. Has an application approved by the Sick Leave Pool Committee.
- F. Membership applications shall be submitted during October. The Committee shall act to approve or disapprove applications on basis of rules herein described. Employees become eligible for participation in the Pool ninety (90) calendar days after approval of membership applications.
- G. A participating employee shall not be required to pay back any sick leave awarded from the Pool except as otherwise provided for in this agreement.
- H. Each participating employee shall contribute, by way of deduction from his/her official sick leave record, eight hours of sick leave anytime the balance in the Pool falls below 1500 hours and providing the committee, by way of the chairperson, is notified and agrees in writing to such contribution by the employees. No employee shall be required to contribute more than sixteen hours in any one fiscal year.

- I. Any participating employee, who is unable to meet Sick Leave Pool membership requirements at the time for contribution to be made, shall be removed from membership, except that any member currently drawing days from the Sick Leave Pool may continue as a member until he/she has drawn the number of days granted to that individual by the Sick Leave Pool Committee.
- J. Each membership shall be on a continuing basis unless a letter requesting withdrawal from the Sick Leave Pool is received before October 1 of any fiscal year. Such letter, directed to the Committee chairperson, shall be acted on upon receipt, and the Committee shall be notified.
- K. Any employee who chooses to withdraw from participation in the Sick Leave Pool shall not be able to withdraw any sick leave days already contributed.
- L. Alleged abuse of any provision contained in this agreement by a participant shall be reviewed by the Sick Leave Pool Committee. A finding of violation of any provision of this agreement may, upon the action and the authority of the Committee, result in expulsion from further participation, and/or a requirement to repay all the sick leave drawn from the Pool, and be subject to other disciplinary action as determined by the County.
- M. The Sick Leave Pool Committee shall review the operation and rules of the Sick Leave Pool at the end of the 2016-2017 fiscal year, and annually thereafter, and issue a written report including any recommendations for changes, to the County.

PROCEDURES

1. Employees shall file membership application with the County's Human Resources Department by May 1, 2016, and during the month of October hereafter on the form titled "Sick Leave Pool - Application for Membership".
2. Santa Rosa County Human Resources shall determine eligibility.
 - A. Employees who apply and are NOT eligible will be notified in writing by the Committee.
 - B. Each eligible employee will have the appropriate deduction made from his/her sick leave and entered into the Pool by their Payroll or Human Resources Department.
3. Participating employees in need of drawing from the Pool will fill out the appropriate form and submit it to their Payroll or Human Resources Department.
4. Applications for leave may be submitted by an interested party if the member is unable to apply.
5. The Committee will meet (or be polled in cases of obvious need) and approve or disapprove the employee's application and determine the number of hours to be awarded.
6. The Santa Rosa County Human Resources Department will notify the employee of the approval or disapproval of the employee's application, the number of hours awarded and deduct the number of hours from the Pool.

7. The chairperson will notify the Committee of meeting dates, times, and sites.
8. Santa Rosa County Human Resources Department will notify the Committee when the number of hours in the Pool has dropped below 1500 hours.
9. The Committee will be comprised of 7 employees, appointed by the Constitutional Officers, with at least one representative from each of the Departments listed below:

Board of County Commissioners (two representatives)
Sheriff's Office
Property Appraiser
Tax Collector
Clerks Office
Supervisor of Elections

10. The chairperson of the Committee will be elected by the Committee.
11. Committee membership shall be for two (2) years. (May continue if appointed again at the end of the two (2) years.)
12. Committee members not completing two (2) years will be replaced by the elected official or appointing authority of the group they represent.
13. All complaints to any Committee member should be reduced to writing, filed with the chairperson, and considered at the time of review of policy.