

### **3.14 Catastrophic Leave**

Effective Date: 02-19-2024

Revision Date:

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures for the donation of sick leave to a Catastrophic Leave Fund which allows an employee to assist another employee in the case of a catastrophic illness or injury of the employee or the employee's immediate family member.

“*Catastrophic Illness or Injury*” refers to a life-threatening or debilitating personal illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves inpatient care in a hospital or similar facility, or continuing treatment by a health care provider. Examples include cancer, complications arising from major surgery, serious accidents, heart attacks, long-term hospitalization and other situations that pose a threat to life or render the employee incapable of performing the duties of their job. Short term conditions requiring brief treatment and recovery (for example, flu, measles, normal childbirth, broken bones, elective surgeries, on-the-job injuries, etc.) are not considered to be a catastrophic illness or injury for purposes of this program.

For purposes of this policy, immediate family is defined as the employee's spouse, domestic partner, child, parent, or any other relative for which the employee is the guardian or primary caregiver.

#### **Eligibility**

- a. Must be a regular, full-time employee.
- b. Employees must be employed with the City of Hutchins for a minimum of one year and have worked at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately before the leave begins.
- c. Satisfactory attendance and performance record.
- d. All paid leave exhausted.
- e. Sufficient information from a healthcare provider to confirm a catastrophic illness/injury exists.
- f. Must elect to donate at least eight (8) hours of sick leave during open enrollment.
- g. Employees who receive donated sick leave may receive no more than 480 hours (12 weeks) within a rolling 12-month period.

#### **Donations**

- The donation of sick leave is strictly voluntary.
- Donated sick leave will go into a leave bank for use by eligible employees.
- Recipient identity will not be disclosed to donating employees.
- The minimum number of hours that an eligible employee may donate is eight (8) hours per calendar year; the maximum is forty (40) hours or no more than 50% of the employee's current balance.
- Employees cannot borrow against future sick leave to donate.
- Donated hours will be deducted from the donating employee's sick leave balance.
- Employees may not designate a particular employee to receive their donated time.

- Employees will be given a chance to donate sick leave annually during open enrollment.
- Any employee who has been approved for retirement or has rendered a resignation to be effective within ninety (90) days will not be eligible to donate sick leave.

## **Procedures**

To use catastrophic leave, an employee completes a *Catastrophic Leave Withdrawal Request* and forwards it to Human Resources. When possible, an employee should request leave from the program prior to exhausting all paid leave. The employee requesting leave will submit supporting documentation from his/her healthcare provider to Human Resources.

Human Resources will determine an employee's eligibility to use catastrophic leave upon receiving sufficient information from his/her health provider(s). If approved, an employee may receive from the Catastrophic Leave fund up to 480 hours (12 weeks) for a specific leave request. Upon exhaustion of 480 hours of catastrophic leave, an employee may not receive additional catastrophic leave for the same illness/injury. The number of leave hours will be determined based on the information provided by the employee's healthcare provider. The final determination must be approved by the Catastrophic Leave Committee.

## **Catastrophic Leave Committee**

Eligible Catastrophic Leave applications will be presented to a committee for consideration. The committee will be comprised of the Human Resources Director, one (1) exempt staff member, and one (1) hourly staff member.

Committee members shall not rule on any application of their own or that of a relative.

The committee is responsible for recommending action on all Catastrophic Leave applications.

## **Catastrophic Leave Exhausted**

If an employee is still unable to return to work after exhausting catastrophic leave, he/she may be subject to a non-disciplinary termination of employment. In this situation, an employee will leave in good standing. He/she will be encouraged to apply for Long-term Disability benefits and/or retirement through TMRS as early as possible to expedite the application and review process.

## **Discontinuation**

In the event this policy is discontinued, all employees who are members of the bank at the time of discontinuation shall remain members without additional contributions until all days in the bank are exhausted or the remaining pool of days is pro-rated back to the contributing employees.