



ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY MANUAL	SECTION Human Resources	NUMBER AM-703.1	EFFECTIVE DATE 11/21/2023
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POLICY:

It is the policy of the County to grant employees extended unpaid leave of absence from the County under certain circumstances. Except as otherwise provided, the decision to grant a leave of absence is a matter of administrative discretion and may only be approved by the County Administrator, department heads or County Attorney as provided in this policy. For policy with regard to absences of short duration, see units ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY, AM-701.1 and SHORT-TERM ABSENCES, AM-702.3.

COMMENT:

1. Employees are eligible for unpaid leave of absence for causes generally beyond the control of the employee and when other types of leave afforded by the County do not apply or have been exhausted (e.g., sick and vacation leave, workers' compensation leave, military leave, FMLA leave, etc.). Employees may be granted a personal leave of absence to attend to personal matters in cases in which the County determines that an extended period of time away from the job will be in the best interests of the employee and the County. The duration of each leave of absence shall be determined by the County.

2. When possible, requests for a leave of absence or any extension of a leave of absence should be submitted in writing to the employee's department head thirty days prior to commencement of the leave period or as soon the need for leave has been determined. The request should include the reason for the leave, the duration of the requested leave, and the expected return to work date. The department head will discuss the request with the Human Resources Director. If approved, Human Resources will notify the employee of the approval and the expected return to work date and include information concerning the payment of any benefit premiums while on leave. Any cumulative leave of absence (extensions included) will generally not exceed 90 days. Leave of absence beyond 90 days in duration, must also receive approval by the County Administrator. If the request for leave of absence is not approved, Human Resources will notify the employee in writing.

3. Employees returning from a leave of absence will be reinstated to their same job or one of similar status and pay provided the County's circumstances have not changed to the extent that it would be impossible or unreasonable to provide reinstatement. If the same job or one of similar status and pay is not available, reinstatement may be deferred until a position is available, and the employee may be granted a preference in recall.



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4. Employees who are unable to report for work because of arrest and incarceration may be placed on a leave of absence provided that it is requested during the first three working days of the incarceration. If the employee is freed on bail, a decision will be made by the employee's department head and the Human Resources Director as to whether to allow the resumption of active employment pending disposition of the charges. They shall determine whether reinstatement would be consistent with the County's needs and requirements. If the decision is to not allow resumption of active employment pending disposition of the charges, a "pre-suspension" hearing will be set, at which the employee will be advised of the reasons for the suspension and would have the opportunity to refute the underlying premises for the suspension and argue for immediate reinstatement. This element of employee "due process" shall generally parallel the protection provided in the unit DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE, AM-807.1.

5. An employee who fails to return to work at the conclusion of an approved leave of absence or an approved extension of a leave of absence will be considered as having voluntarily quit.

6. While on leave of absence, the employee will be required to pay applicable premiums by the end of each month to continue group health benefits. If an employee is delinquent in the payment of premiums, coverage may be terminated by the County. Eligible employees will be provided COBRA continuation rights.

7. No continuous service benefits will accrue during an unpaid leave. This includes vacation, sick leave and retirement credits.