

Chapter 20 - School Assistance and Volunteer Leave (CS)

This policy permits (or, in the case of volunteer fire and rescue service, requires) the University to grant staff employees up to 16 hours of time off with pay per leave calendar year to provide volunteer services through eligible non-profit organizations within or outside their communities. Such service may be provided as a member of a service organization or through authorized school assistance. The policy supports the Governor's Commission on National and Community Service which encourages Virginians to dedicate service to others.

DEFINITIONS

Service Organizations

Organizations that (1) are community based or that have extensions of their organizations within a community, that (2) provide services through voluntary efforts of citizens in the following ways:

- * Relief to physically or mentally challenged persons;
- * Relief to victims of natural disasters or catastrophes (see Emergency/Disaster Leave policy);
- * Health services, emergency relief and shelter, transportation and preparation or delivery of meals;
- * Other direct health or welfare services for the economically disadvantaged; or
- * Community services which assist residents, including child and youth development.

Examples of eligible organizations include volunteer rescue squads, volunteer fire departments, the American Red Cross and Habitat for Humanity.

Eligible Agencies

A public or private nonprofit organization that is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community, and is engaged in meeting human, educational, environmental, or public safety community needs. Excluded is service provided through a church where the only recipients of the service are the constituents of the church (e.g. painting and maintenance of church buildings, yard work, serving on the church Board, etc.).

Note: Activities involving political groups or causes do not qualify for use of this leave.

Pre-school

An early childhood program that serves children for more than nine hours per week, at any time from their birth until their eligibility to enter elementary school. While a preschool program may be home-based, like all other such programs, it must be registered, licensed or certified by the Virginia Department of Social Services, unless it is exempt from licensure under §63.2-1715 of the Code of Virginia.

School

Schools for which this leave may be granted include any public preschool, elementary, middle or high school. This term may include private preschools, elementary, middle or high schools only if the employee has children, step-children or children for whom the employee has custody attending the private school.

School Assistance

Participation in school activities including meeting with teachers or school administrators, attending school functions or performing volunteer work, as described in this policy, that has been approved by a teacher or school administrator.

Volunteer

A person who performs or gives services of his/her own free will. A person who renders aid, performs service, or assumes an obligation voluntarily without monetary compensation.

APPLICATION

Leave under this policy may be used for providing volunteer service through volunteering for non-profit organizations or for school assistance as outlined below.

Volunteer Opportunities

***Volunteer Fire Departments and Rescue Squads**

*Members of volunteer fire departments and rescue squads, or auxiliary units thereof, may be granted paid leave under this policy in accordance with §2.2-2821.2 of the Code of Virginia.

Other Volunteer Service Activities

Employees may be granted paid leave under this policy to provide voluntary service as part of an organized service project sponsored by a community, national or other service organization such as those represented in Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign, Points of Light Foundation, etc.

For example, an employee could be granted volunteer leave to:

- * deliver meals to the elderly or to needy community citizens through an organization such as Meals on Wheels;
- * attend non-profit boards and committee meetings (Scouts, Big Brother/Big Sister, Red Cross, etc.);
- * participate in activities directly related to non-profit fundraising (e.g., set up/take down, registration, answering phones, recruiting/organizing/training volunteers);
- * do yard work, painting, cleaning, maintenance through a non-profit organization, or volunteer for Scouts, Big Brother/Big Sister, or other non-profit organization.

For School Assistance

- * Employees with children may be granted paid leave under this policy to:
 - o meet with a teacher or administrator of a public or private preschool, elementary school, middle school, or high school concerning their children, step-children, or children for whom the employee has legal custody; or
 - o attend a school function in which such children are participating.
- * Any employee may be granted paid leave under this policy to perform volunteer work approved by any teacher or school administrator to assist a *public* preschool, elementary school, middle school, or high school.

Home Schooling

Employees may be granted paid leave under this policy to assist in the education of their child (step-child or child for whom the employee has legal custody) in state-approved home education curricula, including, meetings with local school board officials and required field trips.

PROCEDURE

Supervisor's Approval

Employees must receive approval from their supervisors prior to using volunteer leave. If response to emergency situations as a member of a volunteer fire department or rescue squad will result in tardiness, employees must notify their supervisors according to agency procedures.

Supervisors may require written verification from an official of the service organization for use of volunteer leave. If the leave is used for school assistance, written verification should be from a school administrator or teacher.

Scheduling

Management should attempt to approve leave at the time requested by employees, but have discretion to disapprove leave if it would significantly impact departmental operations.

The University may determine that it is not possible to release certain employees under this policy, such as employees in direct care or public safety positions, due to staffing requirements. When adequate, capable back-up staff is readily available, or if it is possible to adjust employees' schedules, employees' requests should be granted. If they are unable to grant volunteer leave requests, the university should inform affected employees as soon as possible after the decision is made.

AMOUNT/AVAILABILITY

Full-Time Employees

A maximum of 16 hours of paid leave per calendar year will be made available to current employees on January 10 each year and to new employees upon beginning employment.

Part-Time Employees

Hours of paid leave will be made available to Part-Time salaried employees in an amount proportionate to the percentage of hours they work in a full 40-hour workweek.

/Example/: Employees working 32 hours per week are entitled to 12.8 hours of volunteer leave.

DURATION

No Carryover

Leave not taken under this policy in a calendar year will not be carried forward to the next year.

No Payout

There will be no payment for unused community service leave upon employees' leaving university service.
