

## CATASTROPHIC LEAVE BANK PROGRAM

### i. Purpose

The purpose of the Catastrophic Leave Bank is to allow eligible participating employees who have exhausted all available leave balances to receive additional leave benefits for extended absences upon submission of a properly documented application.

**Existing policies for other types of leave are not affected by this program.**

### ii. Eligibility

All regular full-time non-probationary employees with a minimum of one year of service shall be eligible to participate as of the original effective date of the plan. Employees reaching their first anniversary of employment after the plan implementation date may begin participation during the next plan open enrollment period.

**All participation in this plan is voluntary.**

### iii. Enrollment

Eligible employees may enroll by completing an enrollment form available from the Catastrophic Leave Bank Committee. Participation will begin immediately after the employee becomes eligible and completes an enrollment form. Participation requires completion of an Enrollment and Contribution Authorization Form during a scheduled open enrollment period.

Any employee may stop participation by notifying the Committee in writing of the intention to cease participation; participation will continue until the next plan anniversary date after receipt of a request for withdrawal. Such notice must be received by the Committee before the end of the scheduled enrollment period.

Open enrollment periods shall be the months of June and December. The City Manager may declare special enrollment or contribution periods as deemed necessary if requested by the Catastrophic Leave Committee.

### iv. Contribution

Each participating employee will contribute no less than one tour of duty (eight hours - except for 56-hour Firefighters whose minimum contribution will be 24 hours) of accrued sick, vacation, paid time off or short-term disability leave to the Catastrophic Leave Bank each plan year. Initial contributions will be made

during the pay period which includes the plan anniversary date or during one of the open enrollment periods.

**After the initial contribution, the annual minimum will be contributed automatically during the pay period which begins on or immediately after January 1st.** If a participant does not have leave to contribute, the participant will be allowed to remain in the Bank and make the contribution when the employee has accumulated eight (8) hours [one (1) tour of duty]. But if Catastrophic Leave is requested and granted, the employee will be charged one day of leave without pay to serve as his/her contribution to the Bank. All contributions and usage will be on an hour for hour basis.

Initial participation will not be allowed if the required annual contribution results in the participating employee having a balance (sick leave and vacation or paid time off and short-term disability leave) of less than 100 hours (300 hours for 56-hour employees). Additional amounts may be contributed voluntarily by notifying the Catastrophic Leave Bank Committee in writing of the number of hours to be contributed.

Maximum contribution limits will be 40 hours (for 40-hour employees) or 56 hours (for 56-hour firefighter employees).

The Catastrophic Leave Bank may accept up to a maximum of 10,000 donated hours after each enrollment. Donations in excess of that amount will not be credited to the bank. Additional participants may enter the plan by making a contribution which will not change the bank's available hours.

v. Catastrophic Leave Defined

Catastrophic Leave shall mean leave required for treatment or recovery of a non-job related injury or illness to the participating employee which exceeds two weeks cumulatively in duration as documented by an attending physician. This applies to situations where periodic on-going treatment is prescribed. In no event will such leave exceed the earliest of the end of the elimination period for the City's long-term disability program or approval of disability benefits to uniform employees by the appropriate pension board and a return to work date established by the attending physician.

Catastrophic leave is not provided to care for or provide assistance to any person other than the participating employee.

vi. Catastrophic Leave Review Committee

All requests for Catastrophic Leave shall be reviewed by a committee consisting of four plan participants designated by the City Manager and one member from the Human Resources Department designated by the Director of Human

Resources. Attendance of at least four members shall be required to constitute a quorum.

The committee shall meet as required to review requests for Catastrophic Leave approval. If no requests are pending, no meeting is required. Approval of a catastrophic leave request shall require the unanimous vote of the committee members present.

After establishment of any specific required written bylaws or guidelines, the committee will only function to review and act on requests for Catastrophic Leave. Initial activities will include ongoing status review of approved requests and discussion with OMS and Human Resources staff to develop any special reports or procedures necessary.

vii. Request Approval

Upon determination that the requesting employee is a participant and all required documentation is in place, the committee shall complete a leave transfer approval form and forward it to the Human Resources Department for required data entry. The form must specify the number of hours granted or the time period granted for Catastrophic Leave.

viii. Application Requirements

Application for Catastrophic Leave must be made on a standard form which must include or have attached an attending physician's signed statement which shows diagnosis, prognosis, projected return to work date, plus any anticipated restrictions on the employee's work activities at that projected return date. If not provided on the physician's letterhead, the request must contain the name, address, and phone number of the physician and a contact person at that physician's clinic.

ix. Approval/Usage of Catastrophic Leave

The committee's review will ensure each of the following conditions has been met before approval of a request for Catastrophic Leave:

1. Requesting employee is enrolled as a participant.
2. All accumulated leave has been exhausted; no Catastrophic Leave will be approved until all leave has been exhausted; if no leave is available a minimum of the first four weeks/twenty workdays of absence due to any illness/injury leave must be charged to leave without pay before Catastrophic Leave is granted.
3. Proper documentation is complete and is provided in a timely manner.
4. Requesting employee has good job attendance.

The decision of the committee to approve or deny catastrophic leave is final.

x. Miscellaneous Requirements

1. The committee will only approve requests which will keep the Catastrophic Leave Bank in a positive balance.
2. Catastrophic Leave will be established as a separate leave type and employees absent while using Catastrophic Leave will not accrue other leave types. Upon return to active status, leave accruals will resume.
3. Leave contributed to the Catastrophic Leave Bank may not be restored to the contributing employee under any circumstance.
4. Unused Catastrophic Leave credited to an employee will revert to the Catastrophic Leave Bank upon the employee's return to active status or approval of disability benefits should that return or approval of benefits occur prior to the exhausting of the credited Catastrophic Leave.
5. A recurrence of a condition causing the need for Catastrophic Leave within 30 calendar days will be treated as a continuation of the same incident and will require only a written request from the employee for resumption of Catastrophic Leave within the limits previously approved by the Committee. Recurrence beyond 30 calendar days of return to active status will be treated as a new case and will require submission of a new request form and documentation.
6. Participation and contribution to the Catastrophic Leave Bank will not affect participation or eligibility for any sick leave incentive program established by the City of Little Rock. Use of Catastrophic Leave will be treated as leave used for purposes of considering awards under such incentive programs.
7. The plan anniversary date shall be the first day of the first full pay period occurring on or after January 1 of each plan year.
8. Contributions are made solely to the Catastrophic Leave Bank and may not be designated for any specific employee.
9. Participation in the Catastrophic Leave program is from the initial enrollment date or plan anniversary date after completing an enrollment only; participation cannot be made retroactive under any circumstance.