

SECTION: ADMINISTRATION

SUBJECT: EXTENDED LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Original Resolution No.: 99-11-42

Extended Leave of Absence Policy

The County of Warner No. 5 recognizes the need to have available a program for extended leaves of absence and will consider them based on individual employee's applications and circumstances.

Guidelines

1. Extended leaves of absence are considered to be periods of time in excess of five weeks.
2. Employees will submit a written request for an extended leave of absence to the Department Head who will then forward the application with their comments to the County Administrator. This request shall be received at least three weeks prior to the proposed start of the leave with the following information:
 - a. Start date and return date of extended leave.
 - b. Details, reasons and need for the requested leave.
 - c. Include how the leave would impact (whether positive or negative) the County.
 - d. Include what benefits the County would receive by granting the leave.
3. The Department Head will forward the information received from the employee to the County Administrator with a letter of opinion on whether the leave of absence should be granted. Reasons for granting or denying the application for leave should accompany the letter of opinion.
4. When considering whether a leave of absence would be granted, the following criteria will be assessed:
 - a. Years of Service - Employees are required to have completed a minimum of five years of full time service.
 - b. Any positive effects of the leave, such as relevance of training if applicable to their current position or planned job change within the County organization.
 - c. Prospects of the employee remaining with the County after the leave of absence is completed.
 - d. Number of previous leaves of absence requested and granted.
 - e. Job performance and evaluations.
 - f. Any negative effects of the employee being absent from work. (eg. take into account items such as temporary replacement, added training costs, demands of the position, senior position duties, etc.)
5. Based on the above assessment and the reason for the leave of absence, the County Administrator, in consultation with the Department Head, may grant the leave with or without the following salary provisions:

- a. Absence with full or partial pay (eg. If the employee is leaving for reasons which may increase their knowledge and performance with the County)
 - b. Absence without pay (eg. if the employee is considering a career change, receiving a salary or contract payment, is travelling or going on an extended vacation, etc.)
 - c. Benefits may or may not continue with County participation or may be prorated, however, the employee shall be required to pay for the employee portion of the staff benefits program in advance of taking the leave of absence.
 - d. Employee benefit participation shall not be extended beyond one year from the date the leave starts.
6. Local Authority Pension Benefits will be available as per provincial regulations.
 7. All holidays and other entitlements shall be used prior to the start of the leave of absence period, unless otherwise negotiated.
 8. Holidays, sick leave and years of service time will not continue to accrue while the employee is on long term leave.
 9. An agreement must be signed by both parties outlining the terms of the extended leave of absence provisions.
 10. The County may request a guarantee of service following a successful completion of a leave of absence for educational purposes.
 11. If a leave of absence is granted, the employee must acknowledge and understand that they will not necessarily return to the same position (or earn the same pay) as they did prior to the leave of absence. The employee will, however, be given a position that the County Administrator, in consultation with the Department Head, deems appropriate, which may or may not be similar in nature (or in pay) to the position held by the employee prior to the leave of absence.
 12. The employee is required to provide the County with their expected return date prior to the employee commencing their extended leave of absence. If an employee fails to return on the specified date, the employee is considered to have abandoned their position which may result in the termination of the employment relationship without notice or pay in lieu of notice.
 13. If the employee is not satisfied with the decision rendered by Administration, the final decision may be appealed to the County Council whose decision shall be final.