

Meritorious Service Leave Guidelines

Related Rule/Statute: R2-5A-B611 Meritorious Service Leave

Issued: December 20, 2012

Effective: December 20, 2012

Applicability: Uncovered employees, Correctional Officers 1-3, Community Correctional Officers

Description

In accordance with these guidelines, an agency head may provide employees or teams with additional leave with pay in recognition of acts of meritorious or exemplary service for a particular achievement, success or moment of extraordinary individual or group performance.

Eligibility

- Employees who have been involuntarily demoted or suspended during the most recent performance rating period are not eligible to receive Meritorious Leave.
- Employees must have received a “Meets Expectations” rating or better on each rating factor on their most recent performance review using MAP (the State Personnel System evaluation tool) to be eligible for Meritorious Leave.
- Elected officials, agency heads appointed for a fixed term of office, interns, pool, or per diem employees are not eligible for Meritorious Leave.

Requirements

- Meritorious Leave shall be provided without regard to political affiliation, race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability or religious creed.
- Agencies intending to implement a Meritorious Leave Program shall submit a plan for ADOA approval prior to implementation.
- An agency head shall report to the Director of ADOA on the utilization of all variable pay strategies utilized in the previous fiscal year, no later than September 1st of each year.

Administration

Meritorious Leave shall be limited to no more than 24 hours of leave per individual (prorated for less than full-time employees) per fiscal year. Leave awarded shall be used within 12 months of receipt and cannot be paid out. Meritorious Service Leave shall not be transferred to another agency if the employee changes agencies.

Plan Components

Agencies planning to implement a Meritorious Leave plan for ADOA approval shall address the following components:

- **Eligibility:** The agency shall identify any categories of employees that may not be eligible (e.g. temporary or seasonal employees, executive level managers, etc.)
- **Criteria:** The plan shall describe the criteria for receipt of Meritorious Leave, including examples of situations/projects that would qualify. Agencies may also wish to clarify examples of situations/projects that would not qualify for Meritorious Leave.
- **Participation:** The plan shall limit the total participation of recipients. Meritorious Leave is intended to recognize extraordinary events, and as such, only a limited number of employees should receive this leave. Agencies shall delineate guidelines and procedures in their plan that limits participation to no more than 5% of eligible employees, unless an exception is granted by the ADOA Director.
- **Tiers:** Agencies may wish to establish different levels of Meritorious Leave, for different types or degrees of achievements. Leave amounts should be commensurate with the level of efficiency gain, cost savings or productivity improvement.
- **Distribution Targets:** The intent of providing Meritorious Leave is to motivate the workforce, and in general should be targeted toward the employee base and not focused on the upper ranks of the organization. Agencies may wish to delineate goals of selecting recipients of Meritorious Leave, for example perhaps a ratio of 1:4 of managers to employees.
- **Communication:** The plan shall describe how the agency intends to communicate the plan to their employees.

Review Process

Agencies shall submit a draft plan to ADOA for review no later than six months prior to the desired implementation date (i.e. plans are due January 1st if the desired implementation date is July 1st). If changes are necessary, consultation with the agency will occur. A final draft of the plan shall be submitted to ADOA no later than eight weeks prior to the desired implementation date. Approval of an agency's plan shall be for no longer than a one-year duration. The agency shall submit a plan for each year the agency intends to participate in the Meritorious Leave plan.

Reporting Requirements

Upon plan approval, agencies may administer their Meritorious Leave plan without further review by ADOA. At the end of each fiscal year, participating agencies shall submit a report to ADOA by September 1st. The report shall include:

- A brief paragraph describing how the agency is using the Meritorious Leave plan to support the organization's goals or strategic direction.
- A list of the employees that received Meritorious Leave and the amount awarded.

- Key information for each employee on the list including employee name, current base salary, job description, etc.
- The organizational impact experienced as a result of the implementation of the strategy, including impact on retention of high performing employees, employee satisfaction, employee engagement, turnover, etc.