

STATE BOARD FOR TECHNICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION

PROCEDURE

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TITLE: VOLUNTARY FURLOUGH PROGRAM

POLICY  
REFERENCE NUMBER: 8-1-101

DIVISION  
OF RESPONSIBILITY: Human Resource Services

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DATE OF LAST REVISION: July 9, 2020

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**I. PURPOSE**

The following procedure establishes the guidelines by which the South Carolina Technical College System may maximize personnel savings by offering employees the option to voluntarily choose to furlough. The Voluntary Furlough Program (VFP) option is contingent upon the agency meeting legislative guidelines stipulated in state law and in the annual General Appropriations Act. The System Office and individual colleges may implement a voluntary furlough based on agency procedure, state and federal law and applicable South Carolina Department of Administration's Division of State Human Resources (DSHR) regulations.

**II. DEFINITION**

A voluntary furlough is a work arrangement whereby eligible employees are authorized a leave of absence from work, without pay, not to exceed ninety (90) days per fiscal year. An employee may furlough in full or partial day increments.

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### **III. GENERAL STATEMENTS**

- A. The System/College President may institute a VFP. A VFP cannot be enacted if an agency's reduction is due solely to the General Assembly transferring or deleting a program.
- B. The System Office or individual colleges shall develop a plan that establishes the criteria by which employees would be eligible to participate.
- C. All decisions to request participation in the program are voluntary by each eligible employee.
- D. The VFP is coordinated by the System Office/College human resources office.
- E. In the event that the System Office/College implements both a voluntary furlough program and a mandatory furlough program during the fiscal year, furlough days taken voluntarily will count toward furlough days required by the mandatory furlough.

### **IV. PARTICIPATION ELIGIBILITY**

- A. Employees in full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, time limited positions, and temporary grant positions are eligible to participate in a voluntary furlough.
- B. DSHR encourages agencies to research any restrictions on federal or other funds associated with positions before implementing a furlough. In some instances, federal laws associated with funding for certain programs may prohibit employees from participating in a voluntary furlough. In those situations, if a position is only partially federally funded, the voluntary furlough may be prorated.

### **V. PROGRAM GUIDELINES**

- A. Participation in the program is voluntary and subject to approval by appropriate management staff. The VFP may not be appropriate to all areas of the System Office /College, especially those having limited staff.
- B. Participation in the program is not an employee right or benefit and may be discontinued at any time by either party. Denial or termination of a voluntary furlough arrangement is not appealable or grievable; however, all decisions made under this program should be made in a non-discriminatory manner.

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- C. Employees are entitled to participate in the same benefits as otherwise available to them with the exception of receiving their salary. When participating in the VFP, employees will be placed in leave without pay status.
- D. As to those benefits which require employer and employee contributions, including but not limited to contributions to the South Carolina Retirement System or the Optional Retirement Program, the System Office/College will be responsible for making both employer and employee contributions during the time of furlough if coverage would otherwise be interrupted.
- E. The employee remains responsible for making contributions that require only employee contributions.
- F. An employee may furlough up to ninety (90) days per fiscal year.
- G. The System Office/College shall define the incremental periods for furlough such as full or partial days, weekly, monthly, etc.
- H. An employee will continue to accrue annual and sick leave as if they were in pay status.
- I. If a holiday falls during the furlough period, the employee shall be paid for the holiday, as observed by either the System Office /College.
- J. The employee's pay has to be reduced for the pay period in which the leave was taken. The reduction in pay cannot be staggered over the fiscal year.

### **VI. CONDITIONS OF VOLUNTARY FURLOUGH**

- A. Participation in the VFP will be based on management consideration of workloads and work requirements to ensure that agency mission and program needs are met.
- B. An employee's performance review date will not be adjusted; however, for evaluation purposes the employee's review date will be taken into consideration prior to approving a voluntary furlough.
- C. An employee's hire date and continuous state service date will not be adjusted.
- D. The voluntary furlough will not adversely affect an employee's eligibility for advancement or for any other employee right or benefit.

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- E. At the end of the voluntary furlough period, the employee will be expected to resume his/her regular schedule of work at the primary work location.
- F. An employee may be eligible for weekly unemployment compensation if during the week the employee earns less than their maximum weekly benefit amount.

### **VII. APPLICATION FOR A VOLUNTARY FURLOUGH**

- A. An eligible employee shall complete an Application for Voluntary Furlough form (see addendum) and submit the request to his/her supervisor for review and final approval at the appropriate level determined by the System Office/College.
- B. Requests for voluntary furlough will be considered on an individual basis.
- C. The Application for a Voluntary Furlough form (see addendum) must be completed and approved prior to the employee's voluntary furlough beginning.

### **VIII. DOCUMENTATION AND REPORTING**

- A. The System Office/College must submit a Supplemental Service Report (Form 1224) to the South Carolina Public Employee Benefit Authority (PEBA) monthly for all employees participating in the VFP as well as any additional forms necessary for reporting purposes.
- B. The System Office/College must provide to DSHR the following information regarding furloughed employees prior to September 1st of the following fiscal year:
  - 1. Total number of employees who have participated in the furlough program,
  - 2. Total number of furlough days,
  - 3. Estimated cost savings.

The System Office Human Resource Services shall coordinate the annual submission of furlough information to DSHR .

- C. The System Office/College must maintain internal documentation for record keeping purposes to include the individual plan(s) and the Application for Voluntary Furlough form(s) that document the terms of the furlough and emphasizes the employee's voluntary decision to request it.