



Subject/Title

Employee Assistance Program

Date Effective

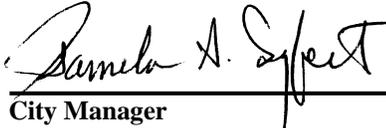
November 17, 1989

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HR 2



City Manager

Human Resources

Responsible Key Business

Objective:

1. To establish an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that provides assistance to employees who have personal problems that adversely affect job performance. The City believes it is in the interest of the employee, the employee's family, and the City to provide an employee service which deals with such persistent problems.
2. This Policy is established for all City employees. However, in recognition of the unique requirements of law enforcement, Police Department employees may not avail themselves of the Employee Assistance Program when their problem is related to the use of illegal drugs. In the interest of public safety, the City Manager may also designate other employees ineligible to participate in parts of the program.

Policy: The goal of the EAP will be to identify the personal problem which is adversely affecting job performance at the earliest possible stage, motivate the employee to seek help, and to direct the employee to the appropriate assistance to resolve the difficulties and restore acceptable job performance.

1. **Problems Covered:** The City recognizes that a wide range of behavioral/medical/personal problems can affect an employee's job performance. Examples of such problems include diseases of alcoholism or other drug dependencies, mental or emotional illness, marital or family stress, financial or legal problems. These problems and others may result in deterioration of job efficiency. The City further recognizes that mental illness, alcoholism and other chemical dependencies are diseases which are responsive to treatment if assistance is obtained in the early stages of development.
2. **Resolution:** In some instances, the employee will overcome such problems independently and the effect on performance will be negligible.

In other instances, normal supervisory assistance will serve either as motivation or guidance by which such problems can be resolved so the employee's job performance will return to an acceptable level. Sometimes, however, neither the efforts of the employee nor supervisor have the desired effect on resolving the employee's problems and unsatisfactory performance persists over a period of time, either constantly or intermittently.

3. **Normal Disciplinary Action:** While it is not the City's intent that this Policy be used by supervisors and managers as a disciplinary measure, it is also not to be used as a shield of

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protection by employees to avoid appropriate/standard disciplinary action. This policy does not supersede appropriate disciplinary action.

4. Performance and Attendance: Any problems which affect work performance and attendance are legitimate concerns of the City. The City recognizes that most of these problems can be successfully treated provided they are identified early and referral is made to the appropriate resource. One of the purposes of the Employee Assistance Program is to assure employees that if such problems are the cause of unsatisfactory job performance they will receive an offer of assistance to resolve those problems in an effective and confidential manner.
5. Problems Not Covered: The EAP is not intended to assist in job related grievances not affecting individual performance (i.e., scheduling problems, job assignment, personality conflicts, training opportunities, etc.) which should be handled between employees and their supervisor through other City policies and procedures.
6. Voluntary Use of EAP: Employees are encouraged to use the Employee Assistance Program voluntarily when they need professional help or guidance.
7. Employee Responsibility: Employees will be responsible for becoming familiar with the Employee Assistance Program and correcting problems that may interfere with job performance.
8. No Special Privilege: Implementation of this policy will not require, or result in any special regulations, privileges, or exemptions from the standard administrative practices applicable to job performance.
9. Job Security and Promotional Opportunities: Participation in the EAP will not affect an employee's job security or promotional opportunities. Such matters are governed by ability, experience, and job performance.
10. Referral to the EAP may occur in three ways:
 - A. An employee may seek help on his or her own by contacting the EAP.
 - B. A supervisor may refer an employee because of deteriorating job performance. When this occurs, the supervisor will be notified if the employee kept the appointment and the extent to which the employee is cooperating with the EAP.
 - C. An employee can be required to meet with an EAP counselor. Should the Key Business Executive, or designee, determine that mandatory referral is necessary, the KBU may contact Employee Relations for assistance in the referral process or may directly contact the EAP to explain the problems which have occurred and to schedule an appointment for the employee. The first appointment arranged by the City with the EAP for an employee may be provided on City time.

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11. The EAP Counselor's Role: The EAP counselor will meet with the troubled employee, assess the problem and offer assistance. That assistance will be the best possible source taking into consideration the nature and severity of the problem, the cost of the treatment, the benefits available to the employee, and other special needs.
12. Employee Compliance: Compliance with the recommendations of the EAP is the responsibility of the employee. An employee who is referred by the City and who refuses to accept diagnosis and treatment recommended by the EAP will be expected to accept the responsibility of maintaining adequate job performance or be subject to normal disciplinary action. *(In situations of mandatory referrals and only in **rare** instances, employees may be advised that compliance with the recommendations of the EAP will be a condition of continued employment.)*
13. Confidentiality: All EAP records shall be kept in strictest confidence. The EAP will not discuss the personal problems of the employee without the written permission of that employee except in the event of child abuse or threat of harm to the employee or others. In cases of child abuse or threat of harm to the employee or others, the counselor is legally obligated to notify the appropriate authority in order that action can be taken to protect those who may be in danger.

In cases of mandatory referrals when compliance with EAP recommendations has been made a condition of continued employment, the employee will be advised that the EAP will provide information to the City concerning the extent to which the employee has complied with recommendations. EAP will also make recommendations to the City about appropriate actions the City may take to more effectively work with the employee.

14. Short-term Counseling and Long-term Treatment: The two types of treatment the EAP counselor can recommend are short-term counseling and long-term treatment.
 - A. Short-term counseling is defined as counseling for personal problems which requires six or less individual counseling sessions. Depending upon the nature of the treatment, short-term counseling may require an employee to be absent from work. Supervisors are encouraged to grant leave of absence (i.e., sick leave, vacation, excused leave without pay and Accident and Sickness benefits) in accordance with City Policy and/or Key Business Work Rules.
 - B. Long-term treatment is defined as treatment for personal problems which requires more than six individual counseling sessions. In most cases, long-term treatment will require an employee to be absent from work. Supervisors are encouraged to grant leave of absence (i.e., sick leave, vacation, excused leave without pay) in accordance with City Policy and/or Key Business Work Rules. It will be the employee's responsibility to request leave in accordance with key business attendance requirements if long-term treatment is required.
15. Family Assistance: Since employee work performance can be affected by problems at home, the EAP is available to the families of our employees. Family members are urged to contact the EAP to receive confidential assistance.

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Responsibilities and References:

1. The Human Resources Key Business shall be responsible for the coordination of this Policy.
2. Employee - All employees have the right to request assistance from the EAP to help them cope with personal problems that are the cause of unsatisfactory job performance. An employee may be required by the supervisor to meet with an EAP counselor. Compliance with the recommendation of the EAP is the responsibility of the employee. Consequently, an employee who is referred by the City and who refuses to accept the diagnosis and treatment recommended by the EAP will be expected to accept the responsibility of maintaining adequate job performance or be subject to normal disciplinary action.
3. Supervisor - Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that all employees under their supervision with a problem that directly affects job performance will have an offer of help through the EAP. Supervisors are further obligated to respect the confidentiality of the information the employee shares with the EAP.
4. EAP Counselor - Counselors for the EAP are responsible for meeting with the troubled employee, assessing the problem, and offering assistance or making appropriate referral. EAP counselors are responsible for the confidentiality of the employee's problem except when existing laws take precedence over confidentiality.

Procedures: Because of the unique factors that compose each employee's situation, there is not one specific procedure for requesting assistance from the EAP. Both the supervisor and the employee have the right to contact the EAP and to request a meeting with an EAP counselor, and each should do so in a way that is consistent with the declarations and provisions described in the Policy.