

	<b>Unpaid Leave of Absence</b>  <i>Adopted on: 08/19/2009</i>
<b>Last Revision Date: 06/26/2024</b>	<b>Policy No. 4.709</b>
<b>Last Enabling Resolution:  138-2024/910-2024</b>	<b>Developer/Reviewer:  Human Resources</b>

**1. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to outline the conditions and procedures for granting an employee an unpaid leave of absence.

**2. Scope**

All full-time and part-time employees of Sedgwick County are eligible to apply for an unpaid leave of absence. Employees of the Sheriff’s Office employees are subject to Civil Service Policy. Elected officials, temporary or seasonal employees and interns are not eligible for an unpaid leave of absence.

**3. Policy Statement**

Sedgwick County recognizes that under certain circumstances an employee may choose to request unpaid time away from work. Therefore, it is the policy of Sedgwick County to grant unpaid leave when all conditions and criteria outlined in this policy are met.

**4. Definitions**

- A. **Unpaid Leave of Absence** – A continuous absence of 31 days to no more than six (6) months.
- B. **Eligibility** – The employee must have exhausted all earned compensatory time and all vacation accruals.

**5. Procedures**

- A. An unpaid leave of absence may be authorized for an employee by the Division/Department Director or Elected/Appointed Official once all accrued paid leave has been exhausted.
  - 1. An employee who is seeking a medically-related leave and/or treatment for themselves or a qualified family member should be referred to the FMLA/ADA Specialist in the Division of Human Resources.
  - 2. Military personnel called into active service should refer to Policy 4.705 Military Leave.
- B. A request for an unpaid leave of absence must be submitted in writing to the applicable Division/Department Director or Elected/Appointed Official a minimum of two (2) weeks prior to the requested leave start date if possible.

- C. The Division/Department Director or Elected/Appointed Official may grant an employee an unpaid leave of absence for a period of at least 31 days up to six (6) consecutive months. Unpaid leaves of absence cannot extend past six (6) months nor can they be less than 31 days.
- D. An unpaid leave of absence may not be retroactive.
- E. Failure to return from an unpaid leave of absence on the approved date may result in termination.
- F. With the approval of the hiring authority, an employee may return early from their unpaid leave of absence.
- G. No sick or vacation leave shall accrue during the unpaid leave of absence.
- H. The time period covered by the unpaid leave of absence shall not be taken into consideration for performance evaluation purposes.
- I. During the employee's approved unpaid leave of absence, their position may be filled temporarily. When an employee returns from an unpaid leave of absence, Sedgwick County will return the employee to the position held prior to the leave.
- J. If a reduction-in-force occurs while an employee is on an approved unpaid leave of absence and their position is included in the reduction, the employee will be separated per Policy 4.603 Reduction in Force.
- K. If, in the interest of Sedgwick County, it is necessary to recall an employee on an approved unpaid leave of absence, the hiring authority may end the unpaid leave of absence by giving the employee a written notice, via certified mail, at least fourteen (14) calendar days prior to the expected return to work date.
- L. Employees currently enrolled in County benefits will retain their health benefits for six (6) months and their County provided life insurance for six (6) months while on an unpaid leave of absence.
  - 1. Employees on an unpaid leave of absence, other than for medical reasons, will not be covered by their KPERS or KP&F life and disability insurances.
  - 2. Employees who are on an unpaid leave of absence due to their own medical reasons will be covered by their KPERS or KP&F life and disability insurances.
  - 3. Employees will be required to pay the employee portion of their benefit premiums while on leave.
  - 4. KPERS and KP&F members may continue paying for their optional group life insurance by completing a KPERS Optional Group Life Insurance Continuation form (KPERS-79C) within sixty (60) days of the start of the leave. Contact [Benefits@sedgwick.gov](mailto:Benefits@sedgwick.gov). Premiums will be paid directly to the insurance company.

5. All voluntary deductions will cease during an unpaid leave of absence. It is the employee's responsibility to re-enroll in voluntary benefits upon return from their unpaid leave of absence.
- M. All cell phone and vehicle allowances will be suspended during an unpaid leave of absence.
- N. Employee must complete their probationary period, if applicable.
- O. A request for an unpaid leave of absence must be submitted utilizing the **Unpaid Leave of Absence Request Form** available on E-line or upon request from Human Resources.
1. Once the **Unpaid Leave of Absence Request Form** has been signed by the employee and approved by the Division/Department Director or Elected/Appointed Official, the form must be submitted to [hrforms@sedgwick.gov](mailto:hrforms@sedgwick.gov) prior to the unpaid leave of absence start date.
  2. The hiring authority must submit a **PAF** to the Division of Human Resources to place the employee on and to return the employee from an unpaid leave of absence.