

Date: April 13, 2022

TO: Los Rios Classified and Management Employees

FROM: Nicole Keller, Employee Benefits Supervisor

SUBJECT: Catastrophic Illness/Injury Leave Program – **VACATION DONATION REQUEST**

No one ever plans on needing Catastrophic Leave, but each year many employees find themselves off work for an unexpected significant illness or to care for a seriously ill family member. In addition, keep in mind that even if you never need to use Catastrophic Leave, donating hours will help your colleagues who may need to use the leave.

PURPOSE The purpose of the Catastrophic Illness or Injury Leave Program is to allow classified and managerial employees the option to donate eligible leave (*accrued, unused vacation hours*) to a Catastrophic Illness or Injury Leave Bank (the Bank). The Bank may be used by a contributing, eligible employee when that employee or a member of his or her immediate family suffers from a catastrophic illness or injury. The program is designed to keep the employee in 100% paid status for up to 90 calendar days after an employee exhausts his/her own vacation time.

DEFINITION Catastrophic Illness or Injury means an illness or injury that is expected to incapacitate an employee from work for an extended period of time, or that incapacitates a member of the employee's immediate family, requiring the employee to take time off from work for an extended period of time to care for that family member. Taking extended time off work creates a financial hardship for the employee because he or she has exhausted all of his or her eligible sick leave, vacation, and other paid time off and is in less than full pay status.

HOW TO DONATE

1. **Please enter the number of hours you wish to donate to the program, if any, into Employee Self Service in the same manner that you submit your monthly absences.**
2. **Select "Catastrophic Donation" from the "Absence Code" drop-down menu.**
3. **Enter the number of hours you wish to donate.**
4. **Click "Submit Absence."**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS re: the Catastrophic Illness or Injury Leave Program (the Program)

1. **When can I donate?** Once per year during the solicitation period. *This year is the third of the 3-year cycle; the solicitation period runs from today through May 10th.*
2. **Who can donate to the Program?** A permanent or probationary employee who has completed six (6) months or more of service may donate accrued, unused vacation leave to the Catastrophic Illness or Injury Leave Bank.

3. **How many hours do I need to donate?** Donations must be in a minimum block of three (3) hours but not more than forty (40) hours per solicitation. You must have accrued and unused vacation hours available as of March 31st in the amount of your donation. *If you recently received a notice indicating that you are in danger of exceeding your vacation accrual cap this year, you may wish to donate in order to reduce your balance below the cap.*
4. **Do I have to donate?** No, donations are voluntary.
5. **How often do I need to donate?** You only need to donate once during the three-year cycle (April 2020, 2021 or 2022) to be vested. The Program runs on a 3-year cycle. We are now in the third year of the 3-year cycle of July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2023.
6. **How do I know whether or not I donated last year?**
The date and amount of hours that you last donated is populated on the ESS Absence Reporting page as “Last Donation Year” and “Last Donation Amount,” respectively. You can also review your past May paychecks in the 3-year cycle for time ‘sold,’ which indicates your participation. In addition, you can also view prior donations in ESS under “Absence Reporting” and “Absence Time History.”
7. **Does the number of hours or time I donate affect my eligibility or days I could be awarded?** No, the number of hours or times you donate during the 3-year cycle will not affect your eligibility or the days you could be awarded.
8. **Do I need to donate prior to using catastrophic leave?** Yes, you must donate to the program prior to use of catastrophic leave at least once during the current 3 year cycle.
9. **How do I use the Program?** To be eligible to apply for Catastrophic Illness or Injury leave, an employee must have satisfactorily completed one year of service with the District and be vested in the program. To be vested, an employee must have donated, prior to requesting a leave, a minimum of three (3) accrued, unused vacation hours at least once during that three-year cycle. Applications for Catastrophic Illness or Injury Leave will be reviewed and are subject to approval by the Catastrophic Illness and Injury Committee. Again, the number of hours or times you donate does NOT affect your eligibility or the amount of leave you may use.

Please note that **we will be unable to accept late entries.** If you do not donate during the current solicitation period, your next opportunity to do so would be during the spring of 2023.

If you have any questions, please contact the **Employee Benefits Department** at benefits@losrios.edu.