Leave Sharing Program Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Leave Sharing Program?
The Leave Sharing Program (Program) is a program that allows for University of Colorado at Boulder and System Administration employees to donate their annual/vacation leave hours to a pool of hours that can then be accessed by eligible employees under certain grave circumstances, upon application to and approval by the Leave Sharing Committee (Committee).

Can I donate hours to the Leave Sharing Program and what types of leave hours can I donate?
Any University of Colorado at Boulder or System Administration employee who has a positive accrued annual/vacation leave balance is eligible to donate hours to the Program. Donations are voluntary. The only leave that can be donated is annual/vacation leave (sick leave may not be donated). Annual/vacation leave hours may be donated at any time by completing the donation form located on the Office of Labor Relations (OLR) website at: http://www.colorado.edu/humres/support/leavesharing.html.

Can I donate annual/vacation leave that I would otherwise lose?
Yes. Employees may donate hours that would otherwise be forfeited due to over-accrual at the end of the fiscal year. The Committee encourages employees to donate hours that would otherwise be forfeited.

Can I designate a specific recipient for hours that I donate to the Leave Sharing Program?
Yes. If requested by the donor, donated hours will be designated for use by a specific, qualified employee. If for any reason the designated employee is not granted leave sharing hours or does not use the donated hours, the hours will be returned to the leave bank for use by another eligible employee.

Who is eligible to receive Leave Sharing hours?
University of Colorado at Boulder and System Administration classified staff members, officers, exempt professionals, and faculty (including research faculty) on 12 month appointments with a minimum of one year of State service or a minimum of one year of University of Colorado employment are eligible to apply for leave sharing hours. State classified temporary service will be counted toward the one year eligibility requirement.

How many leave sharing hours may be awarded to an eligible employee?
The maximum amount of time that can be awarded to any employee is 520 hours per fiscal year.

When can leave sharing hours be used?
The applicant must exhaust all applicable forms of paid leave before leave sharing hours may be applied. For employees applying to the program for their own condition, leave sharing hours may not be used while the employee is receiving short term or long term disability benefits or worker’s compensation benefits. Employees may use leave sharing hours, however, to cover the 30 calendar day unpaid waiting period leading up to the commencement of their short term disability benefits, and after those benefits have been exhausted. Officers, exempt professionals, and faculty on 12 month appointments who have opted not to purchase short term disability
coverage and are requesting leave sharing for their own condition may only use leave sharing hours to cover what would have been the unpaid portion of their 30 day waiting period had they purchased coverage. Any leave sharing hours awarded must only be used in connection to the condition stated in the application. Any leave sharing hours not used in connection with the stated condition must be returned to the leave sharing bank.

**What kinds of circumstances qualify an employee for a grant of leave sharing hours?**

There are four situations which may qualify an employee for a grant of leave sharing hours:

1) The employee, or the employee’s immediate family member, is experiencing a physical or mental illness or injury that either:
   a. poses a direct threat to life, or
   b. is catastrophic – meaning the illness or injury requires inpatient, outpatient, hospice or residential care and results in a period of incapacity (or anticipated incapacity) for a period of 30 consecutive calendar days or more.

2) The employee has experienced a catastrophic event or emergency affecting his/her residence, such as a wildfire, flood, tornado, or other natural disaster, or accidental event such as a fire or natural gas explosion that results in a loss of life or substantial loss or complete destruction of the employee’s residence.

3) The employee is serving as a first responder (e.g. fire fighter, paramedic, National Guard volunteer, etc.) called to respond to such catastrophic events or emergencies listed in Section 2.

4) The employee is on active military service or other military operations and is experiencing a serious financial hardship during the initial call up. In this case the hours granted are used to make up the difference between the employee’s base salary (excluding premiums) and the total gross military pay and allowances.

**Who is included in the definition of an employee’s “immediate family member”?**

For the purposes of the Program, an employee’s immediate family member is defined as an employee’s child who is under the age of 18 or an adult child incapable of self care, parent, spouse, legal dependent, or a person in the household for whom the employee is the primary caregiver. The appointing authority and Committee may require documentation of the familial or caregiver relationship.

**What is an “incapacity,” as it is used to explain those illnesses or injuries that are “catastrophic”?**

An “incapacity” means that the employee or employee’s family member is substantially limited in performing activities in his/her daily life which he/she can normally perform. For example, the employee/employee’s family member is substantially limited in seeing, speaking, hearing, breathing, sitting, standing, walking, lifting, reading, learning, performing cognitive tasks, or feeding, bathing, dressing or grooming him/herself.

**What are some examples of illnesses and injuries that the Program covers?**

Illnesses/injuries that the Program usually covers include: heart attacks, heart conditions requiring heart bypass or valve operations, terminal disease, most cancers, periods of incapacity due to serious chronic medical illnesses (such as diabetes, asthma, epilepsy and emphysema), back conditions requiring surgical procedures and extensive therapy, spinal injuries, strokes, life-
threatening infections, most major and emergency impatient surgeries, serious mental illness requiring inpatient care, and injuries caused by serious accidents suffered outside of work. This is not an exhaustive list.

**What are some examples of illnesses and injuries that the Program does not cover?**
Some illnesses and injuries that the Program usually does not cover include: short term or sporadic conditions or illnesses such as colds, sore throats, sprains, broken limbs not requiring extensive surgery, migraines, mild mental illness requiring only outpatient care, normal pregnancy and cesarean sections, and routine, corrective, elective and outpatient surgeries. This is not an exhaustive list.

**How will the Committee decide if my own or my immediate family member’s illness or injury poses a direct threat to life or requires inpatient, hospice, or residential care and will result in an incapacity (or anticipated incapacity) lasting 30 or more consecutive days?**
The Committee will rely upon the information submitted by the employee’s/employee’s immediate family member’s healthcare provider.

**Am I entitled to receive leave sharing hours?**
A grant of leave sharing hours from the Program is a privilege, not an entitlement. It is intended to be a “court of last resort” for those employees who have exhausted all applicable forms of paid leave and need income protection during a prolonged absence from work. Decisions made with respect to leave sharing applications are not appealable or grievable.

**How does an employee apply for Leave Sharing hours?**
All applicants must fill out the application form. The application process requires completion of the application form by the applicant, appointing authority, payroll liaison and the applicant’s healthcare provider. The appointing authority must approve the applicant’s request before the Committee will consider the application. The applicant’s annual leave records for the current and the prior fiscal years must be attached to the application. The employee must also submit a personal statement explaining the reason for their request for leave. Applications are available on the OLR website or from the OLR at 303-492-0956.

**Who decides whether an employee is awarded Leave Sharing hours?**
The application is reviewed and a final decision is made by the Committee Chair and the members of the Committee. Each member of the Committee, including the Chair, has equal voting rights.