

Annual Leave Sharing Program helps co-workers in need

“When the doctor told me I needed major surgery and was going to be off work for three months, I panicked,” a member recently told *The Postal Record*. She had just been converted to a part-time flexible city carrier and didn’t have enough leave to cover her absence. Beyond just worrying about herself, as a single mom, she had a young son to care for, too.

“I had no idea how I was going to pay the bills while I was off,” she said. “I didn’t have enough leave to cover my absence. How was I going to provide for my son?”

A friend told her about the Annual Leave Sharing Program and helped her consult with her shop steward to get the necessary forms.

“I am so grateful many of my co-workers were generous and donated their leave so I could recover without the added financial stress. I can’t thank them enough,” she said.

This is a situation that comes up often. What if you have a medical situation or are adding a child to your family and you need to take more time off than you have sufficient leave balances to cover? Or maybe you have a co-worker who is experiencing a medical situation and they have run out of leave. You want to help, but don’t know how. You might be able to donate some of your earned annual leave to them through the Annual Leave Sharing Program. This article explains the Annual Leave Sharing Program and how city carriers can take advantage of this valuable program.

NALC has negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Re: Leave Sharing to assist letter carriers in these situations. The MOU, found beginning on page 180 of the National Agreement, incorporates Section 512.64 of the



Employee and Labor Relations Manual (ELM) and requires USPS to offer the Annual Leave Sharing Program. The MOU offers city carriers the opportunity to receive and use donated annual leave, as well as the opportunity to donate their annual leave to another employee under certain conditions.

To be eligible to receive donated leave, an employee must meet three criteria. First, an employee must be incapacitated for available postal duties due to serious personal health conditions or pregnancy, or must need leave to care for a child born to or placed for adoption with the employee within the 12 months prior to taking leave. Second, they must be known to have missed, or be expected to miss, at least 40 or more hours from work beyond what their own annual leave and/or sick leave balance(s) would cover. And third, the employee must have their absence approved pursuant to standard USPS attendance policies.

As indicated above, to use donated leave, the carrier must have exhausted all of their earned leave and have been in a Leave Without Pay (LWOP) status for at least 40 hours. However, donated leave may be used retroactively to cover the 40 hours of LWOP required to be eligible for leave sharing.

City carriers can donate annual leave from their earned annual leave account to another postal employee within the same geographic area serviced by a postal district. In addition, postal employees may donate annual leave to other family members who are postal employees without restriction as to geographic location. Family members include son or daughter, parent and spouse, as defined in *ELM* Section 515.2.

Individual annual leave donations must be for eight or more whole hours of annual leave that has been earned. Fractions of an hour or amounts less than eight hours may not be donated. Dona-

tions may not exceed half of the amount of annual leave earned each year based on the leave earnings category of the donor at the time of donation. Sick leave, unearned annual leave and annual leave hours subject to forfeiture (leave in excess of the maximum carryover that the employee would not be permitted to use before the end of the leave year) may not be donated. The program also restricts employees from donating leave to their immediate supervisors.

Donated leave may be carried over from one leave year to the next without limitation. Unused donated leave remains in the recipient’s account and is not restored to donors. Such residual donated leave may at any time be applied against negative leave balances caused by a medical exigency. At separation, any remaining donated leave balance will be paid in a lump sum.

Prior to requesting leave donations, the recipient’s eligibility must be approved, and a Leave Sharing Program (LSP) file opened by USPS. The carrier wishing to receive donated leave should submit a completed PS Form 3970-R, Request to Receive Donated Leave to their immediate supervisor for processing and approval. The PS Form 3970-R should be submitted as soon as possible; no need to wait until sick leave, annual leave and/or the 40 hours of LWOP are

exhausted. If the carrier is unable to complete or submit PS Form 3970-R to request eligibility, the form may be completed or submitted by any other person acting on the employee’s behalf.

If the employee wishes, a notice requesting annual leave donations will be distributed and posted in postal installations within the geographical area serviced by the district. The notice can also be provided to the local union branch and management organizations.

To donate leave to an eligible recipient, a carrier can complete a PS Form 3970-D, Leave Sharing Program – Request to Donate Leave authorizing the donation and indicating how much leave they would like to donate. An employee may donate additional hours to the same recipient by completing an additional PS Form 3970-D. The restriction of eight or more whole hours, however, applies to each PS Form 3970-D submitted.

Additional guidelines for the program are found in USPS *Management Instruction* EL-510-2019-6, Annual Leave Sharing Program, which can be found on the NALC website under the “Resources” tab in the “Workplace Issues” section. For more information regarding the Annual Leave Sharing Program, consult with your shop steward or NALC branch officer. **PR**

Join the NALC Veterans Group

The NALC Veterans Group is designed to provide NALC members—both active and retired letter carriers—who are also military veterans the ability to connect with fellow NALC veterans and stay informed on issues of importance to letter carrier veterans. It is free to join.

Members receive a pin as a symbol of gratitude for your military service and membership in NALC.

If you are interested in joining the group, complete the sign-up card at right and mail it to the address included. A fillable version is also available at nalc.org/veterans.



You continue to serve your country—
THANK YOU!

NALC Veterans Group

Complete this form and mail it to:
NALC Veterans Group, c/o NALC,
100 Indiana Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20001-2144

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

NALC BRANCH NUMBER: _____ BRANCH OF SERVICE: _____

I BELONG TO THE FOLLOWING VETERAN GROUP(S):

AMERICAN LEGION DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS VETERANS OF FOREIGN WARS

OTHER: _____

Free
to join