



Board of Commissioners

Resolution

B2025-233

15 West Kellogg Blvd.
Saint Paul, MN 55102
651-266-9200

Sponsor: Human Resources

Meeting Date: 12/16/2025

Title: Benefits Policies Update

File Number: 2025-484

Background and Rationale:

The Employee Benefits Policies must be updated to comply with adopted legislative changes effective January 1, 2026.

In May 2023, the Minnesota Legislature passed Minnesota Statutes Chapter 268B, establishing a state Paid Family Medical Leave program. The program's benefits and premium collection begin on January 1, 2026. Paid Family Medical Leave impacts most sections of the Benefits Policies, inspiring major revision for improved clarity and access to benefits.

Previously, the Benefits Policies did not explain or were silent on the types of payout that occur upon separation, including payout to the Health Care Savings Plan (HCSP). In 2006, the board ratified separation payout of sick leave for employees (B2006-44057 and B2006-44058). Later that year, the board approved the creation of the Health Care Savings Plan and outlined the contribution of separation pay to the HCSP of employees based on their date of hire and salary schedule, in alignment with Minnesota Statute 352.98 (B2006-43575).

Recommendation:

The Ramsey County Board of Commissioners resolved to:

Approve updates to Employee Benefits Policies to comply with legislative changes and to clarify existing policies and practices.

Consistently throughout document, spelled out "Minnesota Statute" versus abbreviation.

Consistently throughout document, updated any language identifying other sections in the document to the appropriate section and paragraph.

Section 2 Definitions

- Added clarification that all mention of "Director" in the Benefits Policies means Human Resources Director.

Section 6 Observed County Holidays

- Updated the title of the section from Holidays to Observed County Holidays.
- Clarified that holiday pay requires the employee to be on paid status for the full scheduled workday before and the full scheduled workday after the holiday. Reduces employee confusion.
- Remove any mention of Floating Holiday and move to its own section to help reduce confusion.

Section 7 Floating Holiday

- New section to clarify floating holidays.
- Reworked the description of 7.1 Floating Holiday for Full-Time Employees to remove mention of floating holiday for part-time employees and migrate the details on part-time employees to 7.2 Floating Holidays for Part-Time Employees.

Section 8 Vacation

- Renamed from Section 7 to Section 8.
- Modified 8.3 (formerly 7.3) Adjustments to Initial Vacation Accrual, deleting the paragraph that provides an exception for current employees within 120 calendar days from the approval of the policy, which lapsed on April 16, 2025.
- 8.4 Loss of Accrual: Updated exceptions to reference Sections 12.3 (g) Military Leave and (l) Leaves for Political Office.
- 8.8 Accumulation of Vacation: Removed "Effective January 1, 2022" from the language and struck duplicate word "twice."
- Added section 8.9 Use of Vacation to clarify that the use of vacation hours is subject to department approval. Moved the first sentence from 8.10 Advance of Vacation to 8.9 Use of Vacation ("Eligible employees wishing to use vacation must obtain advance permission from their appointing officer.").
- Remove 8.13 (formerly 7.13), which refers to the procedure for vacation in lieu of salary. The section is based on Minnesota Statute 43A.17 Subd. 9 which was repealed.
- Add 8.15 Vacation Donation, which removes the policy from the Administrative Policy Manual and places it with similar policies that govern sick and vacation leave benefits. Simplified the policy language to focus on the recipient and the donor. Updated the language to comply with Minnesota Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST), Minnesota Statutes 181.9445-181.9448.

Section 9 Sick Leave with Pay

- Renamed from Section 8 to Section 9.
- Added “accrual” to the title of Section 9.1, Eligibility for Sick Leave Accrual.
- Strike “Effective January 1, 2024” from 9.1 (C).
- 9.2 Loss of Accrual: Updated exceptions to reference Sections 12.3 (g) Military leave and (l) Leaves for Political Office.
- Combined 9.3 (formerly 8.3) Accumulation of Sick Leave and 9.4 (formerly 8.4) Accumulation for Provisional Employees.
- Modified 9.4 (formerly 8.4) Transfer of Leave Accumulation to limit sick leave credit to forty (40) hours when an employee is transferred from another merit system, as clarified by the Director of HR on 4/15/2024.
- Moved 9.10 (formerly 8.10) Requirement to Exhaust Paid Sick Time to 9.5 and renamed Required Use of Sick Leave. Added clarification that accrued sick leave must be used when the absence is for a qualifying reason, with exception for paid family medical leave.
- Updated 9.6 (formerly 8.6) Qualified Reasons for the Use of Sick Leave:
 - Renamed from Use of Sick Leave.
 - Updated all qualified reasons to comply with Minnesota Statutes 181.9445-181.9448 (Earned Sick and Safe Time).
 - Deleted 9.6 (E) sick leave for a household member, as the use of paid sick time for care of a non-family member is covered under Minnesota Statutes 181.9445-181.9448 (Earned Sick and Safe Time) and the previous policy is no longer necessary or compliant.
 - Updated 9.6 (F) Bonding to allow employees to use up to 160 hours of sick leave for bonding, to match the use of paid sick leave as agreed upon in all collective bargaining agreements.
 - Updated 9.6 (H) Bereavement to explain that an employee is entitled to use up to 80 hours of paid sick leave for bereavement. The department can agree to allow the use of additional sick leave beyond 80 hours for bereavement, and that any paid time used for bereavement is protected under Minnesota Statutes 181.9445-181.9448 (Earned Sick and Safe Time).
- Updated 9.7 (B) to match the updated statutory language which allows an employer to require reasonable notice for unforeseeable absences, pursuant to Minnesota Statute 181.9447.
- In 9.8 (B), changed the requirement of reasonable documentation to support a sick leave absence from 3 workdays to 2 workdays, pursuant to Minnesota Statute 181.9447.
- Added language to 9.10 Advance of Sick Leave to clarify that any advanced sick hours are treated as regular paid sick leave and receive all of the same protections under Earned Sick and Safe Time law. Also added paragraph (b) to clarify that an employee cannot request another advance until the original advanced hours are repaid.
- Added language to 9.11 Use of Other Paid Time for Sick Leave Purposes to clarify that any paid time used for a qualifying reason are treated as regular paid sick leave and receive all of the same protections under Earned Sick and Safe Time law.
- Reworded 9.16 Appointment to a County Position Outside the Personnel System to improve employee understanding.
- Modified 9.17 Loss of Earned Sick Leave to reference new Section 13, Pay Upon Separation.

- Added 9.18 Earned Sick Leave Upon Separation to mirror the language about vacation payout upon separation, and referenced Section 13.1 Sick Leave Separation Pay.

Section 10 Sick Leave without Pay

- Renamed from Section 9 to Section 10.
- Modified 10.1 Eligibility for Sick Leave Without Pay to clarify that sick leave without pay may be available for any reason covered under Section 9.6 (Qualified Reasons for the Use of Sick Leave), and added language to explain that employees who have exhausted paid sick leave are not entitled to be absent from work unless granted an authorized leave of absence.
- Moved all information about medical leave of absence and reinstatement from medical leave to Section 12 Leave of Absence.
- Added 10.2 Approved Use of Sick Leave Without Pay to clarify that an employee must be approved for leave under Ramsey County policy or state or federal law in order to access unpaid sick time.
- Added 10.3 Unauthorized Leave and referenced Personnel Rule 34.2 Presumed Resignation, which states that an employee on unauthorized leave of three days or more may be presumed to have resigned their position.

Section 11 Workers' Compensation

- Deleted 11.3 Leave of Absence Due to Work-Related Injury, which created a limit of 2-year medical leave for employees on leave for workers' compensation. The policy is not in practice, as workers' compensation statute governs the terms of the workers' compensation leave.

Section 12 Leaves of Absence

- Renamed from Section 10 to Section 12.
- Added 12.1 General Provisions to explain that a leave of absence must be authorized.
- Added 12.2 Requesting a Leave of Absence to explain the general procedure for obtaining approval for a leave of absence.
- Renamed 12.3 from "Mandated Leaves of Absence With Pay" to "Protected Leaves of Absence" and moved all job-protected leaves under this section:
 - Paid Family Medical Leave: created new section and new policy in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Chapter 268B, outlining benefit premiums, notice requirements, access to intermittent leave, and other terms and conditions of paid leave under the law.
 - (b) Family Medical Leave: created new section for the FMLA. Previously, FMLA was not mentioned in the Benefits Policies.
 - (c) Unpaid Medical Leave: moved from Section 10 Sick Without Pay. Added that the job protections of medical leave provided by Ramsey County run concurrently with other job protections under applicable state or federal law. Moved
 - (d) Parental Leave for Child Bonding: renamed and consolidated all parental leave as governed by Ramsey policy and state/federal law.
 - (e) Unpaid Leave for Child School Function: moved next to bonding leave and added statutory language.
 - (f) Bone Marrow and Organ Donation: clarified the right to leave for bone marrow donation or organ donation as governed by Minnesota Statutes 181.945 and

- 181.9456.
 - (g) Military Leave: clarified benefits available to employees under Military Leave as governed by United States Code Chapter 43 and Minnesota Statutes Chapter 192.
 - (h) Jury Duty: clarified the right to jury duty leave with and without pay as governed by Minnesota Statute 593.50.
 - (j) PERA Duty Disability Leave: Added the word Leave to clarify that the leave is separate from the benefit paid by PERA.
 - (l) Leave for Political: added language from Minnesota Statutes 3.088, Subdivision 2.
- Moved 12.5 (formerly 11.5) Cancellation of Discretionary Leaves of Absence to its own paragraph in 12.4 Discretionary Leaves of Absence (d).
- Added Section 12.5 Unauthorized Leave of Absence to reference Personnel Rule 34.2 Presumed Resignation.
- Renamed 12.7 Effects of Leave of Absence Without Pay (previously worded as Effects of Leave of Absence on Salary and Benefit Accrual). Clarified that benefit accrual, salary, and service hour credit does not apply to unpaid leaves of absence except for 12.3 (g) Military Leave, 12.3 (k) Leave to Accept an Unclassified Position, and 12.3 (l) Leave for Political Office.
- Renamed 12.9 Return from Leave and Reinstatement (formerly Reinstatement Rights) to cover the right to reinstatement for employees returning from paid and unpaid leaves of absence, including military leave, protected leaves, and discretionary leaves.
- Added 12.10 Evidence of Ability to Work, migrated from Section 10 Sick Without Pay to the Leaves of Absence section.
- Added 12.11 Inability to Return to Work due to Medical Condition Affecting Fitness for Work, migrated from Section 10 Sick Without Pay to the Leaves of Absence section.

Section 13 Pay Upon Separation

- Created a new section to clarify eligibility for pay upon separation. The language was previously in various sections, including Special Pay, and caused confusion for everyone.
- Section 13.1 (formerly 12.9) Sick Leave Separation Pay:
 - Updated title (was Separation Pay).
 - Moved sentence about seasonal, intermittent and temporary employees above the table to reduce confusion.
 - Renamed table from “Option A Accruals” to “Unused Sick Leave Accrual Amount” since there was no “option B.”
- Added Section 13.3 Vacation Upon Separation, which explains that unused accrued vacation leave is paid out as a lump sum at termination, and that it may be paid out to the Health Care Savings Plan (HCSP) based on the employee’s date of hire and salary plan.
- Created Section 13.4 Other Accrued Paid Leave to explain the payout of floating holiday, comp time, and holiday reserve.
- Added Section 13.5 Payout to Health Care Savings Plan with all language that is currently on RamseyNet to explain the payout of sick leave and vacation leave to the HCSP based on date of hire and salary schedule.

Section 14 Special Allowances

- Renamed from Section 12 to Section 14.
- Removed 14.9 (formerly 12.9) Separation Pay and moved to its own section, Section 13 Pay Upon Separation.
- Revised 14.11 (formerly 12.12) Paid Parental Leave to state that the program sunset on 12/31/2025 and was replaced by Paid Family Medical Leave effective 1/1/2026.

A motion to approve was made by Commissioner Miller, seconded by Commissioner Xiong.

Motion passed.

Aye: - 7: Jebens-Singh, McGuire, McMurtrey, Miller, Moran, Ortega, and Xiong

By: 

Jason Yang, Chief Clerk - County Board