

Community Service and Public Engagement Leave

Jefferson State recognizes the importance of civic engagement and public service. This policy encourages employees to participate in approved activities that benefit the community and broaden their personal and professional development.

Leave Allowance

Employees may request up to one (1) day of paid leave per academic semester to participate in approved community service activities. Leave may only be used for approved activities that occur during the employee's regularly scheduled work hours. Unused leave cannot be carried forward to the next semester or year and does not accrue for retirement purposes. Employees hired after the first day of a semester become eligible beginning the next academic semester.

All requests are subject to review and approval by the appropriate administrator. Employees are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from approved volunteer activities. Personal vehicle mileage, travel expenses, parking fees, meals, or related costs are not reimbursable under this policy. Departments may request approval for coordinated group volunteer activities when operational needs permit.

Approved Activities

Approved activities must be unpaid volunteer service performed for a recognized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose mission is educational, charitable, civic, or humanitarian in nature. Acceptable organizations may include, but are not limited to, organizations such as Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels, Caring Days, United Way affiliated organizations, or similar nonprofits. Additional organizations may be reviewed upon request. Activities must occur within the College's service area.

Volunteer service may not be performed for organizations that discriminate based on race, color, age, gender, religious creed, veteran status, marital status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, childbirth, national origin or ancestry, disability, medical condition, genetic information, or political affiliation.

Non-Approved Activities

Leave may not be used for partisan political activity, lobbying, campaign activity, issue advocacy intended to influence legislation or elections, or activities that could reasonably be perceived as institutional endorsement of a political or religious viewpoint. Examples of non-approved activities include, but are not limited to:

- Coaching a child's athletic team or serving as a youth group leader
- Working a fundraiser for a personal, religious, or family-affiliated organization
- Volunteering as part of a personal vacation
- Attending professional, religious, or personal interest conferences
- Attending political events or rallies
- Participating in protest activities

Employees are expected to use other appropriate leave options for these types of activities.

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Procedures for Requesting Approval

Step 1: Supervisor Approval

- The employee must consult with their direct supervisor to identify an acceptable date for the volunteer activity.
- The employee's normal duties must be covered during their absence.

Step 2: Confirm Volunteer Opportunity

- The employee must contact the nonprofit organization to confirm that a volunteer opportunity is available on the requested date and time.

Step 3: Submit Request

- The employee must submit a written request at least five (5) business days in advance.
- Requests must include supporting documentation, such as a letter or request from the nonprofit organization, an event flyer, website link, or other materials verifying the activity.
- The appropriate administrator will review and approve or deny the request.

Step 4: Complete Volunteer Service

- Upon approval, the employee may schedule and complete the volunteer activity with the organization.
- Employees are encouraged to wear Jefferson State apparel when appropriate.
- Employees may be asked to provide confirmation of participation following the activity.

College-Sponsored Activities

Employees participating in Jefferson State-sponsored service events are not required to submit a request under this policy. Time spent at College-sponsored events does not count against the employee's community service leave for the semester.

Eligibility

All regular, full-time employees are eligible. Employees become eligible to use Community Service and Public Engagement Leave. Employees hired after the first day of a semester become eligible beginning the next academic semester.

Leave must be requested in increments consistent with normal leave practices. Employees are expected to return to work for any remaining scheduled hours unless other approved leave is used or excused by the supervisor.

Requests may be limited or denied during peak operational periods, including but not limited to registration, commencement, fiscal year-end processing, holidays, major campus events, or periods of reduced staffing. Requests may also be denied if operational needs cannot be met or if eligibility or documentation requirements are not satisfied.

Disclaimer

Participation in approved volunteer activities is voluntary. Employees remain subject to applicable College policies and procedures while on approved leave. The College does not assume responsibility for risks inherent to third-party volunteer sites except as required by applicable law.

This policy is subject to change at Jefferson State's discretion.