

SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Background: The City of Madison is responsible for carrying out varied and complex programs, policies and missions. The City's key resource in meeting this responsibility is its employees. The City is therefore concerned about problems that employees experience which may interfere with their job performance and/or jeopardize their ability to effectively carry out their job responsibilities.

Policy: It is the policy of the City of Madison at all levels and locations to maintain and promote an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that will help employees, and their family members/significant others to deal with personal, behavioral, medical or work-related problems.

Guidelines: The Employee Assistance Program utilizes a Coordinator and an internal network of employees, designated as EAP Facilitators, who are recruited from the workforce and receive special training to help promote the program and act as a link to the professional resources. The program also contracts with an external EAP Provider giving employees or family members the option of accessing services internally or externally. Organizationally, the Coordinator position is placed in the Human Resources Department and will report to the Human Resources Director. The Coordinator, and external EAP Provider are trained EAP professionals that provide confidential problem assessment, information and referral to appropriate resources. These may include, but are not limited to community resources, City services, or resources provided by the Employee's Health Care Plan.

In operating its Employee Assistance Program, the City acknowledges that:

1. The impact of difficult personal, behavioral, medical or work related problems can be lessened or remedied by timely and appropriate assistance/treatment. Such problems include, but are not limited to:
 - Marital, family or relationship issues
 - Emotional and mental health problems
 - Alcohol and drug abuse
 - Financial problems
 - Grief
 - Work stress
 - Medical problems
2. Early identification of such problems is crucial and use of appropriate resources to deal with them is encouraged.
3. Participation in the EAP is always voluntary and lack of participation in it is NOT a cause for disciplinary action.
4. No record of services provided by the EAP is entered in an employee's personnel file or reported to management.

Referral Procedures: Employees, family members, and significant others may contact the City's EAP Coordinator, or the external EAP Provider. All employee contact with the Employee Assistance Program is voluntary.

Supervisors should encourage employees to contact EAP when persistent job performance problems occur. If taking disciplinary action, supervisors are required to offer EAP at each stage of the disciplinary process. When an employee is referred to the EAP by his/her supervisor, the employee may choose whether or not to use the program and whom he/she will contact (the internal or external EAP).

Confidentiality Guidelines:

All EAP contacts are confidential with the following exceptions:

1. When making an appointment with a referral resource at the employee's request, it is permissible to give the employee's name and other identifying information, i.e., phone number, if needed. However, personal information, or details of your conference with the employee, may not be disclosed without written consent from the employee.
2. Only at the employee's request, may information be shared. However, prior written consent must be obtained, which specifies exactly what information is to be disclosed, to whom, and for what purpose.
3. EAP contacts with the internal or external EAP staff, or an EAP Facilitator are confidential unless the information disclosed concerns:
 - a. An unexplained, unusual, or suspicious death.
 - b. A case of suspected abuse or suspected neglect of a child.
 - c. A threat to one's own life or safety or that of another,
 - d. A threat to commit, or report of committing, a serious crime.
 - e. A threat to public health and safety.
4. If the EAP Coordinator is served with a subpoena requesting information covered by these guidelines, the Coordinator will notify the employee and consult the City Attorney before any information is released. The EAP Coordinator shall reveal to the City Attorney only information that is necessary for the City Attorney to take appropriate action.

Types of Referrals:

SELF-REFERRAL: Employees with personal problems are encouraged to seek help on their own initiative before health or job performance is affected. They can discuss their problems with the Employee Assistance Program Coordinator, or the external EAP provider. EAP staff will assist the employee in contacting his/her health care provider or in contacting appropriate community resources, if requested. The EAP will also follow up with employees to determine satisfaction with the referral and offer additional support, if needed.

SUPERVISORY: Whenever an employee with an established record of acceptable work evidences a pattern of inconsistent or deteriorating job performance that fails to respond to supervisory input (e.g., verbal instructions, written job instructions, discussion of job performance), the supervisor should encourage the employee to contact the EAP.

When taking disciplinary action, the supervisor must make the employee aware of the City's EAP services. The employee retains the right to accept or reject this offer of assistance. This offer should be repeated at each stage of the progressive discipline process, using the following procedures:

1. Constructively confront the employee about job performance concerns:
 - a. Give an accurate and specific description of job behavior seen or heard and its effect.
 - b. State what job behavioral changes are desired and possible consequences if the change does not occur.
2. Make the offer of assistance (see attached letter).
 - a. When an employee requests help or is experiencing job performance concerns, it is the policy of the City of Madison to offer the EAP. Use of EAP may prevent further deterioration in job performance and the need for additional disciplinary action. All discipline problems may not have EAP solutions, but it should still be offered.
 - b. EAP can provide information, referral and support for personal problems, which sometimes impact on work performance. Note that this may not be the case for her/him, but just because sometimes it is true, the offer of EAP is made.
 - c. Emphasize that use of EAP is voluntary, confidential and free.
 - d. Provide employee with the following:
 - Dated and signed EAP letter which restates the Offer of Assistance.
 - The EAP brochures for both the internal and external programs.
3. Note that seeking help through EAP does not jeopardize her/his job security or promotional opportunities. These are based on job performance, not on use or non-use of EAP. Job performance expectations must be met regardless of EAP use.
4. If the employee accepts the offer of EAP and wants the supervisor to be involved in the referral, the supervisor should:
 - a. Contact the EAP.
 - b. Share with the EAP the main job performance issues/concerns.
 - c. Schedule an appointment for the employee with the EAP.
 - d. Any information the employee shares with the EAP and whether or not they keep the appointment will not be shared with the supervisor without written authorization from the employee.

Any information the supervisor has about the contact with EAP is confidential in accordance with the Confidentiality Guidelines prior noted.

Use of the EAP should not prevent supervisors from taking appropriate disciplinary action if performance problems persist or if performance falls off again after a period of improvement. The Employee Assistance Program is not a substitute for appropriate disciplinary action nor should it be used as a basis for compromising performance expectations or work rules.

FAMILY: Family members and significant others may contact the EAP concerning their own issue or the employee's problem. EAP contact information is made available to City employees and their family members/significant others.

UNION: Like supervisors, union stewards often have the opportunity to observe job performance and interactions with other employees. They can play an important part in introducing EAP and encouraging employee utilization. Union Stewards may be able to serve as a referral source by supporting the employee and encouraging them to contact the EAP.

An employee who wants to consult with EAP staff during their regular scheduled work hours will be allowed a reasonable amount of time to do so. However, it is necessary for the employee to first arrange for time away from his/her workstation. This should be done in accordance with the operating procedures that have been established for the work unit to cover such absences. Any other contacts outside of the EAP, i.e., Community Resources, Health Care Providers, etc., are to be done with approved leave in accordance with established policies and procedures.

Training: The EAP Coordinator will develop an annual training plan to ensure that all EAP Facilitators, Supervisors and Union Stewards receive updates on changes in the operation of this program.



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Mayor

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April 11, 2008

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