

CITY OF RICHARDSON INTERDEPARTMENTAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish standard policies and procedures for usage of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The City of Richardson is committed to providing resources to employees, retirees and their dependents to assist in coping with personal difficulties that could adversely affect work performance, productivity and/or conduct on and off the job by providing an Employee Assistance Program through a third party service.

The purpose of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is to assist employees in identifying on- or off the job personal or behavioral problems that are adversely impacting their work performance and productivity. The EAP provides counseling and referral assistance for City of Richardson employees, retirees and dependents by offering counseling services for alcohol and drug abuse, marital and relational problems, psychiatric and emotional illness, financial and legal difficulties and a wide range of other issues.

The objectives of the City's Employee Assistance Program are to demonstrate the City's commitment to each employee's overall welfare; restore and/or increase employee performance, safety and morale; and increase manager and supervisor confidence and proficiency in addressing employee performance issues.

SCOPE

All employees (including full-time, part-time or seasonal) and retirees are eligible to access the EAP. In addition, employees who have separated from the City of Richardson are eligible for EAP services for six months post-employment.

POLICY

The City of Richardson contracts with a third party to administer the Employee Assistance Program. The Employee assistance program provides various resources to employees and their families with confidential, professional assessment and referral for assistance in resolving or accessing treatment for addiction to, dependence on, or problems with alcohol, drugs, or other personal problems adversely affecting their job performance. Confidential initial assessment/counseling and referral services will be provided without cost to the employee or family member. The cost of treatment or rehabilitation resulting from EAP, including substance abuse/medical referrals, will be the responsibility of the employee. The EAP counselor will assist the employee in determining how the rehabilitation costs can be paid.

PROCEDURE

TYPES OF REFERRALS

A) Voluntary Self-Referral: Employees may obtain information about the City's EAP from their Department supervisor or they may contact Human Resources. An employee may voluntarily contact the City's EAP at any time for assistance. This self-referral can be completely of his / her own initiative. Self-referral by employees is strongly encouraged. The earlier a problem is addressed, the easier it is to deal with and the higher the success rate in overcoming the issue. The self-referral can also be a response to informal suggestions by supervisors. If appointments are necessary during normal work hours, the time may be charged to accrued sick leave. If sick leave is not available, employees may use other paid leave time available or use time off without pay. In most cases, appointments are available after normal working hours or on weekends. Information regarding the reasons employees are seeking assistance through the EAP is strictly confidential. If the employee is self-referring,

supervisors should not ask what the reasons are, and if an employee volunteers any information, it should be treated confidentially.

B) Job Performance Referral: A job performance referral by the supervisor generally occurs in conjunction with some form of disciplinary action. If a supervisor feels that he or she should refer an employee to the City's EAP, he/she should first review the facts with the Human Resources Director or designee. Upon agreement that a job performance referral to the City's EAP is the appropriate action, the Human Resources Director or designee will contact the EAP with the initial information that the employee will contact the EAP within 48 hours. The employee must contact the EAP within the 48-hour time period to schedule an appointment. In most cases, appointments are available after hours or on weekends. When an employee is referred by a supervisor, scheduled appointments for the initial assessment visit(s) should be recorded as time worked. An employee should not have his or her time docked for job performance referred initial assessment appointments. If additional treatment sessions are necessary, and if the treatment sessions occur during the employee's normally scheduled work time, he/she must use sick leave or other paid or unpaid leave, subject to supervisor approval. Although case specific information will be treated confidentially, the EAP will keep Human Resources apprised of employees' general progress, such as whether they have attended scheduled meetings and are cooperating, and whether they are attempting to resolve the issues adversely influencing their work performance. If job performance does not improve, the supervisor may continue the disciplinary process, whether or not the employee contacted the EAP.

C) Return to Duty: As it relates to EAP issues, return to duty procedures will require employees be released by the EAP to return to work. Supervisors should work with their Department Director and Human Resources to determine the specific course of action in each case.

D) Mandatory Referral for Substance Abuse: A Mandatory referral for substance abuse may occur when an employee acknowledges the need for assistance with a substance abuse issue. To avoid disciplinary action, employees must seek referral to the City's Employee Assistance Program before being involved in an on the job accident or otherwise reasonably suspected of violating the Drug Free Workplace Policy. As a condition of continued employment, the employee must comply with the prescribed treatment set forth by the Employee Assistance Program as well as the City's Interdepartmental Policy and Procedure for Substance Abuse Testing.

CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE

The City of Richardson may experience a critical incident or trauma in the workplace that can affect the emotional health, morale and productivity of employees and management. These events can range from an accidental death or suicide of a co-worker to a natural disaster. All of these events can cause a great deal of psychological, mental, physical and emotional stress. To deal with such events, the EAP responds to these critical incidents with a continuum of critical incident stress management (CISM) interventions. The EAP CISM program provides a range of services to the workplace to assist the City in managing the critical incident. Trauma Counselors may provide consultation to management, counseling support to individuals, educational information to affected workers and/or a Critical Incident Stress Debriefing. Stress management interventions assist employees and management in coping and dealing with the responses/symptoms they are experiencing as well as minimize the disruption in the workplace.

RECORDS OF EAP REFERRALS/USE

All records pertaining to the EAP will be treated with a high degree of confidentiality. Confidential information related to voluntary self-referrals will not be released to the City by the third party Employee Assistance Program. Referrals related to job performance, return to duty actions and mandatory substance abuse referrals requires the employee's release of information consenting the EAP to provide status reports to Human Resources staff and the employee supervisor on a need to know basis.

USE OF VACATION, SICK LEAVE AND OTHER LEAVES OF ABSENCE

As applicable, an employee participating in an EAP treatment program must use any accrued sick leave or vacation to continue receiving pay and benefits while involved in the program. The use of vacation, sick leave or leave of absence without pay will be granted in accordance with established policy giving consideration to the nature of the request and the needs of the department and the City.

JOB PERFORMANCE/DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Participation in an EAP program will not substitute for improved job performance, job productivity, or meeting established job standards defined by the department. Should an employee's performance remain at an unacceptable level or not improve within the time frames established by the supervisor, an employee may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Signed by Dan Johnson on 01/19/2016

Dan Johnson, City Manager

Date