

Sick Leave Bank Policy
The University of Alabama in Huntsville

A. PURPOSE:

The purpose of the Sick Leave Bank (SLB) is to provide eligible UAH employees with an emergency pool of sick leave days and to mitigate the impact of lost wages during a time of catastrophic illness or injury.

Definition of Catastrophic Illness

A Catastrophic Illness or Injury is defined as a severe condition or combination of conditions that (a) affect the physical or mental health of the **employee**; (b) result in a life-threatening or life function altering condition; and (c) require an extended period of absence from work. Such life functions include, but are not limited to, loss of physical senses, loss of physiological processes or loss of a limb. Pregnancy is not considered a catastrophic illness. However, complications resulting from pregnancy may be considered catastrophic.

B. ELIGIBILITY FOR INITIAL ENROLLMENT*

To participate in the SLB, an employee must:

1. Be a full-time regular non-probationary employee;
2. Be eligible to accrue sick leave;
3. Have completed one (1) year of continuous service to the University;
4. Have a sick leave balance of 48 hours or more at the time of enrollment; and,
5. Complete a **Sick Leave Bank Enrollment Form** and submit to the Benefits and Employee Services Department, Shelbie King Hall, Suite 102.

C. ELIGIBILITY FOR WITHDRAWAL OF BENEFITS

1. To be eligible to receive benefits through the SLB, an employee must be enrolled in the SLB and a participating member. They must also first exhaust any and all accrued sick, vacation and personal leave. Participating employees are ineligible to participate if they are receiving or have received any of the following benefits related to this specific catastrophic illness or injury.
 - a. Temporary disability benefits due to On-the-Job-Injury
 - b. Long-term Disability
 - c. Social Security Disability
2. The requesting employee must be suffering from a catastrophic illness or injury which necessitates the employee's extended absence from work and for which the employee has **no**

* Employees are reminded that unused sick leave may be applied toward creditable service under the Teachers' Retirement System of Alabama. A maximum of 12 days for each year of credited service may be applied toward retirement credit. Employees should consider the financial impact of losing Teachers' Retirement System creditable service before enrolling in the Sick Leave Bank. Under no circumstances will leave time deposited in the SLB be reinstated or transferred back to the participating employee for any reason, including for retirement plan purposes.

remaining paid leave available. If the employee is not capable of making application on his or her behalf, a member of the employee's immediate family may make application on behalf of the incapacitated employee.

3. The maximum number of SLB days that may be approved is 160 hours (20 days) per qualifying event and one qualifying event per rolling 12-month period. The 12-month rolling period begins on the first day that the employee uses leave from the Sick Leave Bank.
4. Unused leave from the SLB will be returned to the Sick Leave Bank.
5. Participating employees that qualify for FMLA leave may be eligible for SLB benefits. The use of leave from the SLB does not, however, extend the twelve (12) weeks of leave available under FMLA. SLB benefits help to alleviate some of the financial strain of having to take unpaid leave.

Enrollment in the SLB does not guarantee that an employee will receive benefits from the SLB. Each request for withdrawal of benefits will be evaluated and a decision made based on the specifics of the request.

D. APPROVAL

1. The Benefits and Employee Services department in the Human Resources Office will administer all aspects of the Sick Leave Bank.
2. Requesting employees must submit a completed **Request for Withdrawal of Sick Leave Bank Benefits Form** with appropriate signatures and supporting documentation.
3. In order to be considered for benefits from the SLB, the employee's catastrophic illness or injury must require the services of a licensed or Board-certified medical practitioner.
4. Requests for SLB assistance must be accompanied by a written statement from a licensed or Board-certified medical practitioner stating the beginning date of the condition, a description of the catastrophic illness or injury, a prognosis including any limitations and the date the employee may be able to return to work. Periodic progress reports may be required to continue sick leave payments to the employee.
5. Employees may not designate a particular employee to receive their deposited sick leave as this program is for any and all eligible, participating members who may be subject to a catastrophic illness or injury.
6. The application will be reviewed by Benefits and Employee Services staff for completeness and accuracy.
7. Applications will then be submitted to the Sick Leave Bank Committee. The SLB Committee will be composed of three UAH employees: a representative from Human Resources, a representative from the Staff Senate, and an at-large representative with a health care background appointed by the Vice President for Finance and Administration. The SLB Committee will evaluate all applications for SLB benefits and make a recommendation to the Associate Vice President for Human Resources as to whether the employee is eligible to receive benefits from the SLB.

8. The requesting employee and his/her supervisor will be notified in writing by the Associate Vice President for Human Resources of the SLB Committee's recommendation within two weeks of the submittal of a complete request including all required documentation.
9. For approved applications, the Benefits and Employee Services office will submit the appropriate documentation to Payroll so that the employee's available leave balance can be adjusted.
10. Recipients of leave will be full-time employees whose salaries and fringes have been budgeted. Employees who receive benefits from the SLB will be paid at their regular rate for those hours. All monies received will incur appropriate taxes and other required deductions.
11. If an employee's application for benefits from the SLB is not recommended by the SLB Committee, he/she may appeal the decision to the Vice President for Finance and Administration. The decision of the Vice President is final.
12. The SLB Committee will periodically review the SLB rules, procedures and policies and make recommendations as necessary for the effective operation of the SLB.

E. MAINTENANCE OF THE SICK LEAVE BANK

1. At enrollment, each participating employee will be required to deposit a minimum of 8 hours to the SLB. An employee may deposit any number of hours as long as the employee maintains a minimum balance of forty (40) hours in his/her own accrued sick leave account. Deposited hours will be deducted from the employee's accrued sick leave balance.
2. The Bank will be activated when a minimum of 500 hours have been deposited.
3. Employees participating in the SLB will be required to contribute additional hours as follows to remain active in the pool:
 - a. All SLB members will be required to contribute a minimum of two hours annually, in addition to the requirements outlined below.
 - b. When the SLB is depleted below 250 hours, participating members will be required to contribute additional hours in an amount recommended by the SLB Committee.
 - c. If the SLB Committee determines a need to increase the minimum balance of the SLB, participating members will be required to contribute additional hours in an amount recommended by the SLB Committee.
 - d. Participants will not be required to contribute more than 16 hours per fiscal year.
4. Deposits in the SLB are irrevocable and will not be returned if the employee cancels membership in the SLB.
5. Employees may cancel membership in the SLB at the annual open enrollment in September by notifying Benefits and Employee Services in writing.
6. After the initial establishment of the pool, employees may apply to join the SLB during

the open enrollment period held annually during the month of September.

7. The University reserves the right to amend or discontinue the program at any time. The Employee Benefits Committee of the Staff Senate should be notified when any revisions to the policy are considered, including termination of the policy.
8. All accounting and budgetary matters related to the SLB will be handled by the Budget Office.

F. EXCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

1. Employees who are on active duty service in the armed forces are not entitled to withdraw benefits from the Sick Leave Bank.
2. For a participating employee, the right to use the Sick Leave Bank will be immediately lost due to any one of the following:
 - a. Termination of employment
 - b. Voluntary cancellation of participation in the Sick Leave Bank during open enrollment
 - c. Failure to make a required contribution to the Bank
 - d. Failure to provide a required physician's certification
 - e. Abuse or misuse of sick leave
 - f. Misrepresentation in requesting Sick Leave Bank hours

G. IMPLEMENTATION

The Vice President for Finance and Administration is responsible for recommendation and implementation of procedures to enforce this policy.