

HR TRANSFORMATION WEBINAR



North Carolina Employee Leave

OSHR Webinar | Tuesday, October 27, 2026

Employee Leave Options Policy

**WORKING
FOR YOU**



Agenda

Part 1	Basis for Policy Revisions
Part 2	Combined Leave Policy
Part 3	Leave Options Overview
Part 4	Policy Updates / Key Changes
Part 5	Q&A

HR Transformation

"If we invest in our most valuable asset, our people, then we'll have a stronger, safer, and healthier North Carolina for everyone."

Basis for Policy Revisions

1

**Policy aligns with
the updated law:**

*The state human resources
act (G.S. 126) has been
updated*

2

Clear language:

*The policy now aligns with the
law, and the language is more
concise and straight-forward.*

3

Consolidation:

*Multiple leave policies have
been combined into one
document.*

4

**A new name
for an updated policy:**

*Employee Leave Options
Policy*

- New policy effective October 1, 2026
- Includes additional changes approved by the State Human Resources Commission and Governor's Office

Employee Leave Options Policy

Combined Leave Policy

17 Policies Repealed, Combined into Employee Leave Options policy, effective 10/1/2026:

1. Bereavement Leave
2. Bonus Leave Administration
3. Civil Leave & Job-Related Proceedings
4. Community Service Leave (CSL)
5. CSL - Literacy, Tutoring, Mentoring
6. Compensatory Time
7. Educational Leave
8. General Leave - Leave Offsetting
9. Holidays
10. Incentive Leave
11. Leave Without Pay
12. Other Mgmt Approved Leave (OMAL)
13. Paid Parental Leave
14. Personal Observance Leave
15. Sick Leave
16. Transfer Leave
17. Vacation Leave

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Policies that Remain Separate:

- Adverse Weather
- Emergency Closing
- Family Medical Leave (FML)*
- FML - Military Caregiver*
- FML - Qualifying Exigency*
- Family Illness Leave*
- Military Leave
- Voluntary Shared Leave

* To be considered for future combination

Leave Options Overview

Leave Options Overview

- **Bereavement Leave**

- Leave to support employees' mental and physical well-being during the loss of a loved one
- Eligible for 40 hours of bereavement leave following the death of a loved one
- Eligible for 8 hours of bereavement leave to attend funeral or other memorial service of a colleague

- **Bonus Leave**

- Leave provided by the General Assembly in specific amounts, effective dates, and eligibility
- Last given in FY 2019-20

- **Civil Leave & Job-Related Proceedings**

- Civil Leave is used when you are called for jury duty
- Civil Leave can also be used when you must appear in court as a required witness for a case not related to your job (but not if you are the plaintiff or defendant)
- Court attendance or other job-related proceedings is recorded as work time

Leave Options Overview

- **Community Service Leave (3 Options)**

1. Regular 24 hours of annual Community Service Leave can be used for approved school-related activities involving an employee's child (such as meeting with teachers, attending non-athletic academic or arts events, or doing school-approved volunteer work) as well as volunteer service with community organizations, public universities, community colleges, or State agencies when the service is approved
2. You can choose to receive 36 hours each year to tutor or mentor at-risk students for one hour a week
3. You can choose to receive 45 hours each year to volunteer in a literacy program, helping students with reading and writing skills for about five hours a month

- **Compensatory Leave**

- Time off for hours worked beyond the scheduled work period

Leave Options Overview

- **Educational Leave**

- Supports employee development by allowing time for approved job-related courses, with some courses eligible for paid or unpaid leave
- Employees should take approved courses on their own time when possible; if a course is only offered during work hours, they must request paid leave in advance
- Educational Leave may be approved unless the supervisor identifies work responsibilities that prevent the employee from being away
- If Educational Leave is not approved, employees may request Leave without Pay or use accrued paid leave



Leave Options Overview

Holidays (12 Paid Holidays Annually)

- An employee is eligible for a holiday if they are in pay status on the holiday itself **or** in pay status for at least half of the workdays and holidays in the month

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Holiday ^ v	Observance Date ^ v	Day of Week ^ v
New Year's Day	January 1, 2026	Thursday
Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday	January 19, 2026	Monday
Good Friday	April 3, 2026	Friday
Memorial Day	May 25, 2026	Monday
Independence Day	July 3, 2026	Friday
Labor Day	September 7, 2026	Monday
Veterans Day	November 11, 2026	Wednesday
Thanksgiving	November 26 & 27, 2026	Thursday & Friday
Christmas	December 24, 25 & 28, 2026	Thursday, Friday & Monday

Leave Options Overview

- **Leave Without Pay**

- Time away from work not covered by paid leave
- Granted for illness, education purposes, vacation, or for any other reason deemed justified by the agency head

- **Other Management Approved Leave (OMAL)**

- State-related activities: Paid time off approved by management for specified, official state activities
- Emergencies: Paid time off approved by management due to natural or other emergencies

Discretionary OMAL

#	Purpose	Limit
1	To participate in volunteer emergency and rescue services	15 workdays /12 months, shared with item 2
2	To participate in specialized disaster relief services with the American Red Cross	15 workdays /12 months, shared with item 1
3	To donate blood and bone marrow	Reasonable time off
4	To donate organs	Up to 30 days
5	To reward an employee for receipt of a Governor's Awards for Excellence	Up to 24 hours
6	To attend conferences that are closely associated with an employee's work, but that are not required as a work assignment	No stated cap

Non-Discretionary OMAL

#	Purpose	Limit
1	To prepare for participation in his or her internal agency grievance procedure or mediation procedure	Up to eight hours
2	To place an employee on investigatory status	60 days
3	To participate in contested case hearings or other administrative hearings	—
4	To search for and move to a new residence when a transfer is required by the agency	Search: Up to three trips of three days Move: two days
5	To attend workers' compensation hearings	—
6	To serve on state commissions, councils, boards and committees	—
7	Because of a smallpox vaccination	Max 480 hours
8	To train for and compete in Pan American, Olympic or international athletic competition	Up to 30 days a year
9	To cover time that an agency is closed for emergencies	—

Leave Options Overview

Paid Parental Leave

- Amount & Pay:
 - Up to 12 weeks of paid leave at 100% pay for birth, adoption, foster care, or other legal placement on/after October 1, 2026
 - Birthing parent receives 4 weeks for recuperation following miscarriage or stillbirth after 12th week or transfer of child custody following birth
- Who's Covered:
 - Eligible full-time state employees in executive-branch agencies and participating public schools/community colleges; part-time employees receive a prorated amount
- Eligibility:
 - 12 months of continuous service and 1,040 hours in pay status in the previous 12 months at the time of the qualifying event
- Timing & Usage:
 - Must be used within 12 months of the qualifying event; may be used continuous or intermittent
- Coordination:
 - Runs concurrently with FMLA when the employee is eligible

Leave Options Overview

- **Personal Observance Leave**

- May be used for a day of significance to the employee, including a day of cultural, religious, or personal significance or observance
- Must be used in a single work shift

- **Transfer Leave (Relocation Leave)**

- Leave used to Find a new residence and relocate after a required transfer

- **Vacation & Sick Leave**

Leave type	Allowable Uses
Vacation Leave	Rest, personal needs, and any other purpose.
Sick Leave	The employee's own illness, injury, or medical appointment, and care for a member of the immediate family.

LATEST UPDATES

Policy Updates

Leave organized as...

Leave that Accumulates as a Balance

- Vacation leave
- Sick leave
- Compensatory leave

Leave Granted as a Set Amount – Annual Schedule

- Holiday leave
- Community service leave
- Personal observance leave

Leave Granted as a Set Amount - Qualifying Event

- Bereavement leave
- Paid parental leave
- Civil leave
- Incentive leave
- Educational leave
- Other management approved leave (includes transfer leave)

Leave without Pay

Eligibility depends on:

Appointment Type

- Eligible: Career, probationary, permanent, non-permanent experiential, and time-limited appointments
- Not eligible: Temporary appointments and contractors

Time Worked

- Employees working 20 or more hours per week are eligible; leave is prorated for part-time employees
- Employees working fewer than 20 hours per week are not eligible, (Exception Paid Parental Leave may apply)
- Exempt appointments are generally eligible unless the agency has an alternate leave policy or specific exclusions
- Note: Some leave types have additional criteria

Vacation Leave

- Increase minimum leave to 120 hours
 - Increase leave by 8 hours per year for ALL employees
- Added a leave category for employees with 25+ years of state service
- All leave earning employees should see the new amounts in their October leave

17

Years of Total State Service	<u>Previous</u> Hrs/ Month	<u>Eff 10/1</u> Hrs/ Month
< 5 years	9 h 20 m (14 days)	10 h (15 days)
5 but < 10 years	11 h 20 m (17 days)	12 h (18 days)
10 but < 15 years	13 h 20 m (20 days)	14 h (21 days)
15 but < 20 years	15 h 20 m (23 days)	16 h (24 days)
20 but < 25 years	17 h 20 m (26 days)	18 h (27 days)
25+ years (new!)		20 h (30 days)

Bereavement Leave



Codifies authority for bereavement leave for **all Executive Branch agencies**



Expands definition of Immediate Family to include domestic partners and individuals with a relationship equivalent to that of a family member



Expands definition of colleague to include any state employee with whom the employee has worked regardless of agency or recency



Removes requirement for documentation and leaves to agency procedure

Other Changes...

- **Paid Parental Leave:** Expands paid parental leave to 12 weeks for both the birth parent and non-birth parent for events on or after 10/1/2026
 - The pregnant employee still receives 4 weeks for recuperation following miscarriage or stillbirth after 12th week or transfer of child custody following birth
- **Sick Leave:** Adds closure of a school or dependent care facility due to a public health emergency as an allowable use of sick leave
- **Other Management Approved Leave (OMAL):** Includes up to three days of paid leave for Governor's Award for Excellence recipients and now includes Transfer Leave; all other approved uses remain unchanged

Other Changes...

- **Community Service Leave (CSL):** Merges the policies for the three current types of CSL to clarify differences and allowable uses
 - Amounts and reasons remain the same
 - Volunteering/parental involvement; tutoring/mentoring; literacy program
- **Civil Leave:** Clarifies that job-related civil proceedings is time worked, whether during normal work hours or outside of normal work hours
 - Civil leave for non-job-related matters and Jury Duty is unchanged
- **Educational Leave:** Provides agency flexibility on the amount of leave needed for the approved course(s)
 - Removes 5-credit-hour course per academic semester limit
 - Eliminates references to Extended Educational Leave

New Summary Table on Policy Page

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Employee Leave Options Policy

The State of North Carolina provides its employees with leave, meaning paid or unpaid time away from work, as a component of the Total Rewards package, alongside salary, benefits, and the other programs available to employees. The State encourages employees to use the leave they earn and expects agencies to support them in doing so.

This policy outlines the standards associated with most types of leave available to state employees, including commonly used types of leave like vacation and sick leave. These standards include which employees are eligible, the amount of leave available, and when it can be taken.

A few types of leave have their own separate policy, specifically: Family and Medical Leave, including Military Caregiver and Qualifying Exigency leave, Family Illness Leave, Voluntary Shared Leave, Military Leave, Adverse Weather, and Emergency Closing. These leaves cover specialized circumstances with detailed rules; please see [OSHR's full list of policies](#) to find policies covering these leaves.

Employee Leave Options Policy FAQs

[https://oshr.nc.gov/
state-employee-resources/
benefits/leave/
employee-leave-
options-policy-faqs](https://oshr.nc.gov/state-employee-resources/benefits/leave/employee-leave-options-policy-faqs)

Leave Type

General Leave FAQs

Bereavement Leave
FAQs

Paid Parental Leave
FAQs

Sick Leave FAQs

Vacation Leave FAQs

Questions?

Working for You webinars continue throughout the year!

Thank you!