

**Leave Without Pay**

**1.0 Purpose** Set guidelines for employees to be able to take time off without pay. It is not the intent of this policy to permit or endorse taking such leave without good reason. It is expected that employees use sick and annual leave wisely to avoid the need to enter into a leave without pay status.

**2.0 Applicability** To all Bladen County employees

**3.0 Policy**

3.1 The Department Head may grant a County employee an extended leave of absence without pay for a period not to exceed six (6) months for reasons of personal or family illness, pregnancy and related conditions, or for special work that will permit Bladen County to profit by the experience gained or the work performed. When a period of leave without pay ends, the employee will be reinstated to the same position, if it is available, or to an equivalent position for which the employee is qualified. The employee shall be guaranteed a position of the same classification, seniority, and pay.

3.2 Request for leaves of absence without pay will be submitted to the Department Head in advance as possible.

3.3 An employee shall use annual and sick leave or compensatory leave (except for FMLA) prior to going on leave-without-pay status. A non-exempt employee may elect to use accrued compensatory time for FMLA reasons; however, this time will not be counted against the 12-week FMLA allotment. Bladen County may not require the use of compensatory time for FMLA purposes.

**4.0 Benefit Accrual**

4.1 Vacation and sick leave credits will not accrue during leave without pay (see 4.4 for exception). Individual hospitalization provided for the employee by the employer during regular pay status will not be provided as employer expense benefits during leave without pay unless the employee is on the payroll a minimum of one-half (1/2) the working days during the calendar month or is within the twelve (12) weeks of covered leave under the FMLA. The employee, however, may continue to be eligible for any benefit(s) under the County's group plans, provided that the employee pays for it by the 25<sup>th</sup> day of each month. Failure to do so, will forfeit the employees eligibility.

4.2 If a holiday falls during the time without pay, an employee does not receive the holiday pay.

4.3 Longevity pay and annual pay increases are not affected.

4.4 An employee on Workers' Compensation will accrue vacation and sick leave credits.

**5.0 Termination**

Failure to report for duty at the expiration of the leave-without-pay period, unless an extension has been granted, shall be considered a resignation.