



TITLE	POLICY NUMBER	
Meritorious Service Leave	DCS 04-19	
RESPONSIBLE AREA	EFFECTIVE DATE	REVISION
Human Resources	July 27, 2018	1

This policy does not create a contract for employment between any employee and the Department. Nothing in this policy changes the fact that all uncovered employees of the Department are at-will employees and serve at the pleasure of the appointing authority.

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Department of Child Safety (DCS) is committed to recognizing employees for outstanding contributions to the Department's mission and goals. DCS establishes this Meritorious Leave Policy to recognize employees for superior performance or achievements above and beyond their expected responsibilities.

This Meritorious Service Leave Policy is applied in accordance with the provisions contained in the [Arizona State Personnel System \(ASPS\) Rules](#) and the [Fair Labor Standards Act \(FLSA\)](#).

II. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to uncovered DCS employees. It does not apply to contractors, temporary employees, interns, or volunteers who perform services for DCS but who are not directly employed by DCS.

III. AUTHORITY

[A.A.C. R2-5A-B611](#)

Meritorious Service Leave

IV. DEFINITIONS

Department: The Department of Child Safety (DCS).

Director: The Director of the Department of Child Safety.

Employee: Any full-time or part-time individual directly employed by DCS and being paid under the authority of a State of Arizona payroll system.

Meritorious Service Leave: A period of paid leave granted to uncovered employees as an acknowledgment of exemplary service and outstanding contributions. Covered employees are not eligible to receive Meritorious Service Leave. It does not adjust an employee's base pay, nor does it have any cash value.

Uncovered Service: Employment at will that includes all state employees except those in covered service, in accordance with [A.R.S. § 41-741\(20\)](#).

V. POLICY

A. Guidelines

1. Meritorious Service Leave is intended to recognize extraordinary accomplishments above and beyond regular work assignment, and therefore only a small percentage of eligible employees will receive it. In no way does this diminish the day-to-day achievements of dedicated DCS staff.
2. Under the State Personnel System Compensation Guidelines, no more than 5% of the agency's employees may receive Meritorious Service Leave per year. The Department intends to allocate the majority of Meritorious Service Leave awards to staff-level positions and the remainder (no more than 25%) to supervisors/managers.
3. Meritorious Service Leave shall be limited to no more than 24 hours of leave per employee (prorated for less than full-time employees) per fiscal year.
4. Meritorious Service Leave awards shall be awarded in 8 hour increments, not to exceed 24 hours per employee per fiscal year.

B. Eligibility

To be eligible for Meritorious Service Leave, employees *must*:

1. be an uncovered at-will employee on the date on which the Meritorious Service Leave was awarded;
2. have received a 2.0 (Meets Expectation) or better on their most current performance evaluation;
3. have served a minimum of six months with DCS;
4. be in good standing (i.e. not have received any formal disciplinary action, including a letter of reprimand, suspension, or involuntary demotion during the previous 12 months).

C. Approval

Final approval of all Meritorious Service Leave awards will be made by the Director and Deputy Directors after the approval of the employee's management chain of command.

VI. PROCEDURES

A. Nomination Process

1. Supervisors and managers must complete [this docuSign form](#) and explain why an employee should be granted Meritorious Service Leave. In the narrative section of the form, the supervisor/manager must describe an above and beyond achievement, identifying:
 - a. what was done and why this action was deemed exceptional; and
 - b. how the achievement contributed to a tangible benefit for the Department and/or the children and families we serve, such as increased efficiency, cost savings, enhanced productivity, or exceptional social work.
2. Nominations will be routed through the employee's chain of command to the appropriate manager/administrator.
3. Approved nominations will be routed to the Human Resources Director to ensure the employee meets eligibility criteria.

4. If approved, nominations will be forwarded to the Director/Deputy Director for final approval. A copy of the signed, approved nomination form will be forwarded to DCS Payroll so they may process the award in the next payroll cycle.

B. Use of Meritorious Service Leave

1. The receiving employee shall use the Meritorious Service Leave within one year (12 months) of receiving the award. Leave not used after 12 months shall be forfeited and shall not be paid out upon separation. Meritorious Service Leave balances can be found in the employee's Your Employee Services (YES) account. It is the responsibility of the employee to manage his or her balance to avoid forfeiture. The employee will not be notified prior to forfeiture.
2. If an employee transfers to another state agency or leaves state service, all unused Meritorious Service Leave is forfeited.

C. Tracking and Reporting

1. DCS Human Resources will keep a record of Meritorious Service Leave utilized in each fiscal year through the use of payroll reports. The record will include EIN, employee name, job classification, MAP rating, amount of hours awarded, and supervisor status (non-supervisor or supervisor).
2. At the end of each fiscal year, Human Resources shall report to the Director of the Department of Administration the utilization of Meritorious Service Leave. The report shall include:
 - a. a description of how DCS is using Meritorious Service Leave to support its mission and goals;
 - b. a list of employees who received Meritorious Service Leave and the amount awarded;
 - c. information for each employee on the list including name, current base salary, job description, etc.;
 - d. the organizational impact experienced as a result of implementation of the strategy, including impact on employee retention, satisfaction, engagement, turnover, etc.