

## **How Does Volunteer Time Off Affect Leave Management?**

Are your employees volunteering on their own time? Fifty-percent of employed Canadians report doing volunteer work, so the answer is probably yes. Employed volunteers report significantly fewer hours than their unemployed counterparts. Your employees may want to volunteer more, but may not be able to due to their work hours.

That's why some companies are now offering employees paid time off for volunteering. Employees can use their volunteer time off to pursue volunteer activities, without dipping into their vacation or personal days. Here's what you need to know about paid volunteer time and how it will affect leave management.

### **How to Offer Volunteer Time Off**

Your employees may already be taking paid time off to volunteer. They may be using their vacation days, personal days, or even their sick days to work on volunteer projects. You can make volunteering easier for your employees by adding a new bucket of paid time off for volunteer time.

Among companies that have a formal paid volunteer time policy, eight hours a year is the average time given. Eight hours a year is a good place to start, but feel free to offer more. As you know, you need to offer competitive benefits to stand out from your competitors. Some companies give their employees five days a year of paid volunteer time. Others will offer as many as eight hours per month.

Once you've decided how much paid volunteer time your company can afford to give, advertise it to your employees. When people know about the new paid volunteer time policy, they'll be more likely to take part.

### **Benefits of Paid Volunteer Time**

Paid volunteer time can have big benefits for your company. These days, companies need to compete to attract and retain the best employees, and your paid volunteering policy will help you stand out. The policy can also help boost the reputation of your

company in the community. It lets your company give back to the community in a visible way, without needing to donate large sums of money.

Employees will benefit, too. They'll get the opportunity to make a difference in the community. Better yet, they'll get paid for making a difference. Volunteering gives people a greater sense of purpose. It can help to reduce depression and stress. Due to these positive benefits, employees may be healthier and miss less work.

### **How to Manage Volunteer Leave**

While offering paid time off for volunteering has obvious benefits, you may be concerned about how it will affect leave management. This is a valid concern. If your company is currently managing employees' leave requests manually, your managers and HR employees may not have time to handle additional requests.

When employees request time off, they need to fill out a paper form or talk to the manager. Their managers need to approve the time and let human resources know. Then, human resources needs to track how many leave hours have been used and how many are left. Since volunteer time may be taken in short increments, the administrative tasks can add up quickly.

Don't let the fear of increased administrative work keep you from offering paid volunteer time. For easier leave management, start using an all-in-one HR solution. With this solution, the request and approval workflow is managed online. The solution automatically tracks the hours employees have taken. You can also view real-time leave calendars to track everyone's volunteer hours.

Small businesses can simplify other HR processes with HR solutions, too. You can manage everything from core HR to benefits administration with your solution. These additional benefits make using these solutions an obvious choice for companies.