

## Memorandum of Understanding

### Time-Off Awards

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) is made by and between the American Federation of Government Employees SSA General Committee (“Union” or “AFGE”) and the Social Security Administration (“SSA” or “Agency”), jointly the “Parties,” regarding time-off awards for AFGE bargaining unit employees at SSA. By entering into this MOU, neither party waives any rights under 5 U.S.C. 71 or the current SSA-AFGE National Agreement (“National Agreement”).

A Time Off Award (TOA) is an award granted to an individual that allows an excused absence without charge to leave or loss of pay. This award is in recognition of superior accomplishment or other personal effort that contributes to the quality, efficiency, or economy of Government operations, as defined below.

#### **A. Eligibility Criteria**

1. Employee must be either:
  - a. in good standing (i.e. have a successful rating of record (an appraisal of at least summary Level 3 and their current performance is at least successful));  
or
  - b. deemed at an acceptable level of competence (i.e., for employees not covered under an appraisal program or without a current rating of record), such as a new hire employee who has not yet received a rating of record.
2. Employee must have performed a special service or act in connection with or related to their official duties that contribute to the efficiency or other improvement of the agency.

#### **B. Granting Awards**

1. Management can issue TOAs at any time, not to exceed their delegated authority within the TOA allotment issued by DCHR. TOA allotments to supervisors are proportionate to the number of employees in their units. These allotments may be periodically updated and will determine the agency’s total awards allocations for each fiscal year (FY).

For example, if DCHR issues a TOA allotment to supervisors for 4 hours per employee in their unit, supervisors with a unit of 6 employees would have 24 hours allocated for distribution and a unit of 16 employees would have 64 hours allocated for distribution per FY. In this example, the agency’s total allocation would be 240,000 hours if the agency had 60,000 employees (4 hours per employee).

2. TOAs should generally be given in four or eight-hour increments, but no less than one hour, and must be in whole hours (not fractions). The award amount limitations are as follows:
  - a. No more than 40 hours may be granted for a single contribution (or, in the case of a part-time employee or an employee with an uncommon tour of duty, one-half the average number of hours of work in the employee's biweekly scheduled tour of duty).
  - b. No more than 80 hours of time off may be granted to a single employee during an FY (or, in the case of a part-time employee or an employee with an uncommon tour of duty, the average number of hours of work in the employee's biweekly scheduled tour of duty).
3. Allocations dynamically adjust to changes in staffing levels within the work unit during the FY (e.g., units gaining employees increase in authority, units losing employees decrease in authority). Supervisors should assess the number of employees in their unit at the time of granting an award and any prior awards given that FY to determine the remaining number of hours they can grant for that FY.
4. All offices, regardless of public service conditions (e.g., wait times, backlogs), should grant some level of TOAs to employees in a fair and equitable manner, consistent with Article 3, Section 2.A of the 2019 SSA-AFGE National Agreement. Local management will make every reasonable effort to use their allotment of hours each FY.
5. TOAs will be based on special acts or services and not associated with annual performance ratings. TOAs are awarded for recognition of contributions to the quality, efficiency, or economy of operations. The parties recognize that acts or services may include improving office morale, promoting a positive work environment, or workloads and operational considerations.
6. TOAs may not be combined with other forms of awards or be issued for an act or service already recognized.
7. Award amount(s) must be commensurate to the significance of an act or service and be documented in the associated justification.
8. Employees can submit TOA nominations for their peers or themselves to management at any time, explaining the special act or service performed by the nominee(s).

### **C. Using Time-Off Awards (TOAs)**

1. TOA must be used within one year after the award's effective date.
  - a. If it is not used within one year, it is lost.

2. If an employee separates from the agency prior to using the TOA, the hours are forfeited and will not be transferred between agencies.
3. TOAs must be scheduled and used in accordance with Article 31, based upon the nature of the request (e.g., use of TOA for annual leave purposes, sick leave purposes).
4. TOAs may not be donated to the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program or transferred to another employee.
5. The existence of a TOA will not affect the ability of an employee to request and use any “use or lose” annual leave balance in accordance with Article 31.

**D. Recordkeeping and Information**

1. The Agency will provide the General Committee with a briefing of the annual TOA allotment made by DCHR.
2. Following the processing of TOAs for a fiscal year, the Agency will provide the Union with (by March 1st) a listing of all granted AFGE BUE TOAs by Deputy Commissioner or equivalent component with awarded employee’s positions and grades, as well as EEO protected class within each component, to the extent permitted by law and regulation.
  - a. The Agency will provide a listing as outlined above during the current fiscal year of TOAs that were granted on a biannual basis (March and October).

For the Agency:

For the Union:

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