



Office of the Mayor

ACTION CALENDAR
November 4, 2003

Date: October 19, 2003
To: Members of the City Council
From: Mayor Tom Bates *T. Bates*
Subject: *Berkeley Champions for Kids* City of Berkeley Volunteer Employee Release Time Policy

RECOMMENDATION:

The Council 1) approve, in principle, the *Berkeley Champions for Kids* City of Berkeley Volunteer Employee Release Time Policy; and 2) direct the City Manager to return to Council for final approval, an assessment of fiscal impacts, a work plan, and a timeline for implementation.

BACKGROUND:

The mayor is proposing an employee volunteer release policy that encourages city employees to participate in mentoring, tutoring, coaching, career counseling, work-based skills development with youth. Drawing from research and using the State of California's Mentor Initiative as a successful guide, the Mayor's office developed a proposal for a Volunteer Employee Release Policy that was unanimously approved by the Personnel Board on September 2, 2003.

The proposed Policy will allow City employees up to forty (40) hours per year of paid leave, for the purposes of mentoring, tutoring, and/or providing support and guidance to Berkeley's youth. Employees must use an equal amount of their own time prior to requesting paid *Champions for Kids* leave. Release time may be granted to employees who provide tutoring, coaching, career counseling, or work-based skills development to "at risk" youth through schools and other approved community-based and city programs. This release time is to be used for volunteer activities that usually occur during an employee's normal work schedule and may only take place at an approved agency that serves youth, such as schools, recreation centers, libraries, after school programs, etc.

Volunteer Employee Release Time can also be used for mentoring and providing training and education for youth in the workplace. A city department has the option of sponsoring a work-based learning project for students of Berkeley High School or Berkeley Alternative High School. A team of employees can work together to develop on-the-job skills training, combined with a one-to-one mentoring component. Projects for on-the-job skills development should

reinforce school lessons by helping students understand academic skills that are used in the “real world”.

The Human Resources staff will develop a comprehensive work plan and timeline for implementation.

FISCAL IMPACTS:

Studies show that volunteer employee release time benefits the workplace as well as the community. Research demonstrates that providing employee release time for community service time can impact organizations in the following ways:

- Increased impact in areas of strategic importance
- Improved image and reputation
- Recruitment and retention
- Good extension of business
- Development of employee skills
- Enhanced team spirit

For these reasons, we believe the fiscal impact of this program will be concentrated in the start-up phase, program monitoring and oversight. The following areas will warrant review when assessing the fiscal impacts of this innovative program:

- Staff time to develop program
- Staff time to implement program
- Production of materials

The City Manager and staff may identify other impacts during the course of the review.

CONTACT PERSON: Mayor Tom Bates, 981-7100

ATTACHMENTS: Mayor’s Proposal for *Berkeley Champions for Kids*, City of Berkeley Volunteer Employee Release Policy

MAYOR'S PROPOSAL

Berkeley Champions for Kids

CITY OF BERKELEY

VOLUNTEER EMPLOYEE RELEASE POLICY

On September 2, 2003, the City of Berkeley Personnel Board voted unanimously to recommend to the City Manager adoption of this program, understanding that there is a "meet and confer" with the Unions

For more information or questions contact:

Julie Sinai

Senior Aide to the Mayor

Office of the Mayor

2180 Milvia Street, Berkeley, CA 94704

510-981-7102 phone

jsinai@ci.berkeley.ca.us

Mayor's Proposal
Berkeley Champions for Kids
CITY OF BERKELEY
VOLUNTEER EMPLOYEE RELEASE POLICY

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. PROPOSED CITY OF BERKELEY EMPLOYEE RELEASE POLICY.....	3
2. WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE CITY..	6
3. RISK MANAGEMENT.....	8
4. FOUR BASIC STEPS TO DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYEE RELEASE POLICY.....	8
5. TWO EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC SECTOR MODELS.....	9
6. RESOURCES.....	10

Berkeley Champions for Kids
PROPOSAL FOR A CITY OF BERKELEY
VOLUNTEER EMPLOYEE RELEASE POLICY

I. PROPOSED CITY OF BERKELEY EMPLOYEE VOLUNTEER RELEASE POLICY

Almost 20% of the total K-12 enrollment in the Berkeley public schools (approximately 1800 out of 9600 students) is at risk of failing one or more core classes. As a result, the Mayor of Berkeley has proposed a community-wide volunteer initiative focused on youth, *Berkeley Champions for Kids*. To actively support Berkeley's youth, this initiative is an effort to recruit and place volunteers in schools and community-based programs, such as libraries, recreation centers, community-based after school programs, neighborhood associations, etc.

As part of this effort, the mayor is proposing an employee volunteer release policy that encourages city employees to participate in mentoring, tutoring, coaching, career counseling, work-based skills development with youth. Drawing from this research and using the State of California's Mentor Initiative as a successful guide, the Mayor's office has developed this proposal for an Employee Release Policy, which was unanimously approved by the Personnel Board on September 2, 2003. The Human Resources staff will work out the details once the policy is passed by City Council.

Employee Volunteer Release Policy

The City of Berkeley *Champions for Kids* Volunteer Employee Release Policy will allow City employees up to forty (40) hours per year of paid leave, for the purposes of mentoring, tutoring, and/or providing support and guidance to Berkeley's youth. Employees must use an equal amount of their own time prior to requesting paid Champions for Kids leave.

Definition of Mentoring and/or Providing Support and Guidance to Youth

For the purpose of granting release time, mentoring and/or providing support and guidance is defined as a relationship over a prolonged period of time between two or more people where older, wiser, more experienced individuals provide constant, as needed support, guidance and concrete help to younger at-risk persons as they go through life. An "at-risk" youth is a minor whose environment increases their chance of becoming a teen parent, school dropout, gang member, or user of alcohol and drugs.

Release time may be granted to employees who provide tutoring, coaching, career counseling, or work-based skills development to "at risk" youth through schools and other approved community-based programs.

This release time is to be used for volunteer activities that usually occur during an employee's normal work schedule and **may only take place at an agency that serves youth, such as schools, recreation centers, libraries, after school programs, etc.** Activities include, but are not limited to, providing academic support and guidance through tutoring, mentoring, coaching, and/or career counseling. Other volunteer activities can include participation in volunteer committee or support group meetings, mentor/volunteer training and special events sponsored by the program.

Employee Volunteer Release Time can also be used for mentoring and providing training and education for youth in the workplace. A city department has the option of sponsoring a work-based learning project for students of Berkeley High School or Berkeley Alternative High School. A team of employees can work together to develop on-the-job skills training, combined with a one-to-one mentoring component. Projects for on-the-job skills development should reinforce school lessons by helping students understand academic skills that are used in the “real world”. Additionally, city staff will have the opportunity through mentoring in the workplace to provide guidance and support to a young person.

Release time for this purpose is subject to prior supervisory approval and is based on workload considerations, satisfactory job performance, and attendance. To be eligible, an employee must work full time and have successfully completed the probationary period for his or her current position

Employees must use an equal amount of their own time (e.g., vacation, lunch, personal holidays, or compensatory time off during the work day and/or personal time during non-working hours) prior to requesting Berkeley Champions for Kids paid release time. For example, if an employee requests two hours of Berkeley Champions for Kids paid release time, the employee must have used two verified hours of personal time prior to receiving approval for Berkeley Champions for Kids paid release time. Requests to use lunch, vacation, or compensatory time off for volunteering are subject to workload demands and employees must receive prior approval from their supervisor. Situations may arise that require employees to adjust volunteer activities to ensure that workload considerations are met. Supervisors and employees should plan volunteer and work activities carefully to minimize the need to adjust scheduled volunteer activities.

Champions for Kids Employee Volunteer Release Policy:

In order to be eligible for *Champions for Kids* Release Time an employee must:

1. Have a permanent full-time appointment;
2. Have successfully completed the probationary period for their current position, and,
3. Have committed to mentor, tutor, coach, and/or provide support and guidance to a child or youth through a *Berkeley Champions for Kids* approved organization or department for a minimum of one year. (Most programs are aligned with the child’s normal school year; however, there may be some that are less or more. Department management may make exceptions to the one-year commitment based on the type of youth program that is selected).

Amount of Release Time

Employees who wish to participate in the *Champions for Kids* Employee Volunteer Release Time Policy may be granted up to forty (40) hours of paid release time per calendar year.

Employees must use an equal amount of their own time (approved annual leave, vacation, personal leave, personal holiday, or lunch breaks during the workday and/or personal time during non-working hours) prior to requesting Champions for Kids Release Time. For example, if an employee requests two (2) hours of Champions for Kids Paid Leave, he/she must have used two

(2) verified hours of his/her personal time prior to receiving approval for Leave. *Champions for Kids* Release Time does not need to be requested in the same week or month as the personal time was used. It does, however, have to be requested and used before the end of the calendar year.

Champions for Kids Release Time Approval and Verification

Champions for Kids Release Time approval is subject to verification of time spent volunteering with a *Champions for Kids* approved agency. Employees who request *Champions for Kids* Release Time are required to complete a "Request for *Champions for Kids* Release Time Form" that can be obtained from their supervisor or the Human Resources Department. This form allows for supervisory approval and verification of time spent volunteering.

Approval of *Champions for Kids* Release Time requests are subject to the operational needs of the City of Berkeley workload considerations, satisfactory job performance and attendance, budgetary limits, and limitation imposed by law. Other leaves (e.g., vacation, annual leave, personal leave) requested by employees who wish to volunteer are subject to the same approval requirements as in existing departmental policies.

As part of this plan, there are two avenues for volunteering with youth:

- 1) In the community with an approved youth-serving agency
- 2) In the employee's workplace as part of an approved "work-based learning program".

1) A community-based youth serving organization must meet the following criteria to qualified as a *Champions for Kids* approved agency:

- *A statement of purpose*
- *An orientation for volunteers and mentors*
- *Eligibility screening for volunteers and mentors*
- *A readiness and training curriculum for all volunteers and mentors*
- *A matching strategy for volunteers and programs; mentor and mentee*
- *Direct site-based supervision and monitoring process*
- *A support, recognition, and retention component*
- *Closure steps*
- *An evaluation process*

2) A city department must meet the following criteria to qualified as a *Champions for Kids* City work-based learning program:

- *A statement of purpose and a long range plan*
- *An employee team committed to work together to design and implement the mentee training program*
- *An employee team ready, trained, and willing to be trained to implement program with youth*
- *A team leader who will ensure accountability in program and coordination with high schools*
- *Individual employees committed to providing one-to-one guidance and support to mentees*
- *Eligibility screening for volunteers and mentors*

- *A readiness and training curriculum for all volunteers and mentors*
- *A matching strategy for volunteers and programs; mentor and mentee*
- *A site-based supervision and monitoring process*
- *A support, recognition, and retention component*
- *Closure steps*

II. WHAT'S IN IT FOR THE CITY?

Providing employee release time for community service or “volunteering” in the community is more commonly associated with the private sector. Research conducted over the last 10 years by professional human resource associations has demonstrated the effectiveness of employee volunteer efforts in the corporate sector. According to the frequently cited 1993 report by The Conference Board in New York City, “Volunteer activities develop such characteristics as creativity, trust, teamwork, and persistence. They build skills and attitudes that foster commitment”. Additionally, employee volunteer time can impact organizations in the following ways:

- Increased impact in areas of strategic importance
- Improved image and reputation
- Recruitment and retention
- Good extension of business
- Development of employee skills
- Enhanced team spirit

With all the research on the private sector, one might ask, how do these benefits translate for the public sector? In this proposal we will focus our attention on three main areas:

- Development of employee skills
- Enhanced team spirit
- Recruitment and retention

In selecting these three areas, we are not concluding that the other areas do not transfer into the public sector. Most definitely, they do. When one assesses what the U.S. Federal Government accomplished under the Clinton administration, one can see that departments that focused their volunteer efforts on areas that “impact strategic importance” felt a “bigger bang for the buck”. And, while the government may not be trying to “sell” a product, there has been increased attention paid to the need for government at all levels to be more “customer oriented”. The public sector is constantly trying to improve its image with the citizenry – therefore image and reputation are undoubtedly very important to public administrators and elected officials. Lastly, whether the department is public works, planning, finance, etc., having a “good extension of business” helps the agency function responsively in the community. Nevertheless, these issues deal most directly with the image and public relations of the agency or business.

The three areas of focus for this proposal deal directly with the benefits and issues pertaining to human resource management.

- **Development of employee skills**

Volunteering in the community provides a real-life learning experience. It takes employees out of their day-to-day duties, and instead of placing them in a windowless hotel conference room to watch a power-point presentation on time management or cultural competencies, they enter the world of the community. In the community, employees have the ability to apply project management skills, communication skills, planning, public speaking, teamwork, leadership, working and communicating with diverse communities, etc. Such benefits cannot be found in the traditional classroom setting. Experiential training provides a low cost, highly effective (if done properly) environment for employees to apply their existing knowledge and skills and to gain new skills. Employees can better perform their duties at work with the enhanced skills they acquired through their volunteer efforts.

- **Enhanced team spirit**

Team spirit means that people are working together with a common vision and goal in mind. Often internal strife, whether it be poor communication, competition in the workplace, division of labor, make teamwork inside the office hard to foster. Staff often focus on their own responsibilities, their own goals, etc. and fail to share an overall strategic vision of where the organization is going and how they fit into the team. The common tactic to build a team is to host some activities (ropes courses, games, competitions, socials, etc.) and reorganize people into working groups.

An effective team-building activity is to participate in a community project together. Organizing fellow employees to build a house for a low-income family, set up a “lunch-buddies” program with a nearby school, clean up the waterfront, or mentor and train young people in the workplace, all provide more opportunities for staff to work together toward a common goal. They can then transfer those experiences back to the workplace for future team-oriented activities. Community projects also break down the hierarchy outside of the office. For example, an administrator will sit side by side another employee as they tutor 5th graders in math. This informality increases personal comfort levels that can be transferred back into the office.

- **Retention and recruitment**

The more personal rewards gained by the employee, the greater his or her self-esteem and ability to be a proactive problem solver on the job. An employee who receives personal gains that can be applied to his/her work and who are also acknowledged for their volunteer contributions, will be less susceptible to job dissatisfaction. In fact, employees who participate in volunteer programs are likely to improve in productivity, along with morale and self-esteem. *Personnel Journal* (1994) cites a 1992 study by IBM and the Graduate School of Business at Columbia University, demonstrating a clear link between volunteerism and return on assets, return on investment and employee productivity. A company with a high community involvement score was also likely to score high in employee morale and citizen satisfaction. “Morale is as much as three times higher in companies with volunteer programs”. High morale is critical for employee retention in both the private and public sector.

A key ingredient for the retention of employees is recognition. Recognition is also a strategic component of a successful volunteer program. In the *Report to the President on Strengthening Our Commitment to Service*, twenty-one (21) Federal agencies reported that they have formal

recognition and award programs to acknowledge, encourage, and support employees who perform volunteer work.

Lastly, service learning efforts and school partnerships improve employer visibility, applicant organizational knowledge, and provide early recruiting opportunities (Hayes & Kearney p. 116). An excellent example is the Berkeley Fire Department which is developing a project with the local high school with two clear objectives: 1) providing fire fighters who expose youth to the basics of fire suppression and safety, and 2) identifying new recruits.

III. RISK MANAGEMENT

No employer, public or private, should proceed with a volunteer program without exploring risk management. If volunteering is done during working hours, some key issues to define include:

- a) Workers Compensation liability
- b) Insurance liabilities (vehicle, board of directors, property coverage)
- c) Laws that protect children and the agency from incidents of sexual abuse
- d) Laws that protect against sexual harassment
- e) Matching considerations for mentors and/or volunteers
- f) Agency readiness to accept and supervise volunteers

Learning from the State of California Governor's Mentor Program whereby all state employees working with youth are required to pass a fingerprint clearance, the City of Berkeley will engage staff in discussions on how to implement this effort to reduce risk and ensure the safety of children.

While it is impossible to eradicate all risk from volunteer programs, agencies should assess, anticipate, strategize and prepare for risks associated with the program (North & Sherk 2002). The goal should be to reduce and minimize the risks associated with the programs, and be prepared to trouble shoot and problem solve when an incident arises.

IV. FOUR BASIC STEPS TO DEVELOPING AN EMPLOYEE RELEASE POLICY

In designing and implementing the *Berkeley Champions for Kids* volunteer employee release policy, we encourage staff to apply the four basic steps for successful programs, as described in the research.

1) Form a representative committee to identify project guidelines. Make sure there is employee and management buy-in for the program. Because people have different interests and comfort levels for volunteering, make sure volunteer components include both individual and/or group action. Also, it is helpful to include donations (community chest, toys, etc.) to complement the volunteer activities. This committee can clarify appropriate learning objectives, identify and prepare the appropriate (and "ready") agencies and/or departments for volunteer placement, align the experience with appropriate training materials, ensure there are connections that can be brought back to the workplace and assess the results of the program overall.

2) Outline who is eligible for the benefit. Meet and confer with the appropriate labor unions as necessary. Some agencies only offer the program to full-time permanent employees. Other agencies offer it at a pro-rated scale for part-time permanent employees. Make clear that probationary employees are not eligible for the benefit. Ensure that involvement in the program is voluntary. Volunteerism doesn't work if it is forced.

3) Ensure that middle and senior management support the program. A major agency initiative will not succeed without management buy-in due to the fact that communication and implementation of policy and procedures travel to employees through senior management. It is the manager who must approve the volunteer release or leave and it is the manager who recognizes the employee efforts and accomplishments.

4) Recognize and reward employees who volunteer in the community. For reasons already stated, recognition fosters feelings of appreciation and satisfaction in the workplace.

V. TWO EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC SECTOR MODELS

a) U.S. Federal Government

April 22, 1998 President Clinton issued a memorandum on "Strengthening Our Commitment to Service", whereby he directed all Federal departments and agencies to explore additional measures to expand citizen service opportunities for Federal employees. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) provided guidance on work scheduling and time off to support Federal employees volunteer activities (Report to the President, October 1998).

The OPM report states, "Since agencies are trying to encourage true volunteerism in community service... paying an employee raises questions of whether such an activity is truly a "volunteer" activity." The report summary shows a mix of compensated and non-compensated time scenarios. All 14 executive departments, plus 43 independent agencies and commissions submitted reports to OPM. Here are some highlights:

- Scheduling Flexibilities and Leave
 - Alternative work schedules
 - Credit hour programs
 - Condensed workweek
 - Paid travel time complemented with donated lunch hour
 - Allowed limited hours (i.e. 52 hours per year) of excused absences
 - Job sharing and part-time work

- Agency Sponsored Programs
 - Adopting Needy Families
 - Pro-bono and Volunteer Community Service Programs
 - Education Partnership Program
 - Mission Related Programs (i.e. IRS participated in Volunteer Tax Assistance; NASA conducted various science programs with youth)

b) California Governor's Mentor Initiative Program

Under the leadership of Governor Gray Davis, the Governor's California Mentor Initiative Program was established. This program allows state employees up 40 hours of paid leave per year to be matched by an equal amount of the employee's own time for the purpose of mentoring a young person. Mentor leave approval is subject to verification of time spent mentoring with a California Mentor Initiative – Quality Assurance Approved Mentoring Organization. Employees who request Mentor Leave are required to complete a "Request for Mentor Leave Form" that can be obtained from their timekeeper, supervisor, or Personnel Office. This form allows for supervisory approval and verification of time spent mentoring. Approval of Mentor Leave is subject to the operational needs of the State of California and Departmental workload considerations (Office of Statewide Health Planning). Twelve (12) of thirteen (13) bargaining units in the State of California have reached agreements on Mentor Leave.

RESOURCES

Roberts, G., Issues, Challenges, and Changes in Recruitment, *Public Personnel Administration* 4th Edition, Eds. Hayes and Kearney, New Jersey 2003.

BSR Staff, Volunteer Release Time White Paper, *Business for Social Responsibility (BSR)*, www.bsr.org/BSRResources/WhitePaperDetail 2001-2003.

Geroy, G., Wright, P., and Jacoby L., *Toward a conceptual framework of employee volunteerism: an aid for the human resource manager*. MCB UP Limited, London 2000.

Caudron, S., Volunteer Efforts Offer Low-cost Training Options, *Personnel Journal*, Vol. 73, No. 6, pp. 38-44, June 1994.

Smith, K., Employer-Supported Volunteerism in Your Association, *Canada's Association Management Magazine, Association*, February-March 2002.

Habitot for Humanity, *Volunteerism: Why you should promote it within your company*, www.habitot.org.za/volunteerism.htm.

National Work-Life Alliance, A Work-Life Tool: Leadership Development Through Corporate Volunteerism, An Innovative Approach to Developing Innovative Leaders, *Leadership/Volunteerism Tool*, August 2002

North, D. and Sherk, J. *Mentoring Essentials: Risk Management for Mentoring Programs*, The EMT Group, for the California Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, 2002.

Mentor Leave Guidelines, Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development, California

Sherk, J., M.A., *How to Develop An Operations Manual for Your Mentoring Program*, The EMT Group, undated.

Agreement between State of California and California State Employees Association (CSEA) covering Bargaining Unit 1, Professional, Administrative, Financial, and Staff Services, Effective January 31, 2002 through July 2, 2003

Department of Human Resource Management, *Leave to Provide Community Service, Virginia Policies and Procedures Manual*, Policy No: 4.40, Effective date: 07/01/01.

Office of Personnel Management, *Strengthening Our Commitment to Service – A Report to the President on Measures Taken by Executive Departments and Agencies*, Washington D.C. October 1998.

Schad, S. and Markoff, B., *Doer's Guide: Learning by Serving: Transforming Culture with Life-Changing Service Learning*, The Vector Group 2003 (presented to American Society of Training and Development Conference).

Points of Light Foundation, *Best Practices in Workplace Volunteering*, Washington DC 2002.

MPR Associates, Inc. community service program, Berkeley California
www.mprinc.com/community