

Employee Assistance Plan
Policies and Procedures for the Employees of
Department of Finance and Administration

(Effective 5/15/05)

The Department of Finance and Administration understands that the health and well being of employees and their families have a significant impact upon ensuring a cost effective, productive, and safe environment for its employees. Department of Finance and Administration believes that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can be essential to the success of meeting the organization's service goals by reducing the impact of emotional and physical difficulties on employees' job performance. The DFA Human Resources Director shall act as the agency's EAP Coordinator. This program shall be utilized as follows:

I. Self-Referral

- A. For self-referral, an employee and/or their family member may initiate EAP services by directly contacting the EAP provider. It is not necessary for the employee to first contact his/her supervisor or the EAP coordinator to initiate services.
- B. All employee inquiries about EAP services, whether made of the EAP provider, the EAP coordinator, or the supervisor, are strictly confidential and cannot be discussed with anyone else without the written consent of the person requesting information and/or assistance.

II. Supervisory Referral

- A. When an employee's work performance is falling below acceptable standards, it is the supervisor's responsibility to keep detailed documentation of the deteriorating performance and offer alternative means of assistance to the troubled employee. The supervisor should follow the regular procedures established in the *Mississippi State Employee Handbook* and offer supervisory assistance to resolve the problem. If the problem continues, the supervisor can again discuss the documented performance problem with the employee and at this time suggest the option of seeking assistance through the EAP.
- B. If the employee chooses to accept this referral to the EAP, then the supervisor may contact the EAP, may have the employee contact the EAP directly, or may contact the EAP coordinator for assistance with the referral process. It is the employee's responsibility to do whatever is necessary and/or recommended to bring job performance back up to an acceptable level. The employee should be reminded that documentation of his/her referral to and participation in the EAP will NOT be kept in his/her personnel record.

- C. If the employee refuses assistance, fails to address the work performance issue, or fails to keep scheduled EAP appointments, then regular disciplinary procedures will be followed. If the employee accepts the assistance but continues to exhibit poor job performance, regular disciplinary action will follow.
- D. Supervisors may contact the EAP agency directly for advisement, referral, and resolution of employee matters. The EAP coordinator's role is one of consultant on an as-needed basis to assist employees and supervisors alike in the process of utilizing the EAP. For optimal flexibility, however, contact with the EAP coordinator is not required.

III. Leave Usage for EAP Utilization

- A. For all DFA employees, time away from work for voluntary EAP utilization will be recorded as Personal Leave in accordance with the *Mississippi State Employee Handbook*.
- B. For all DFA employees, follow-up EAP services for treatment of a clinical disorder which have a severe impact may be covered by Medical Leave without prior use of Personal Leave in accordance with the *Mississippi State Employee Handbook*.
- C. In cases where DFA refers an employee for EAP assessment, whether for suspected substance abuse or other issue, absence from work for the initial assessment will be recorded as Administrative Leave. Subsequent absences from work for follow-up services will be recorded as Personal Leave, or as Medical Leave in accordance with the *Mississippi State Employee Handbook*.
- D. Inasmuch as the success of the EAP depends upon employees having access to services, and given that circumstances will inevitably arise that cannot be anticipated, supervisors have the discretionary authority to assist employees in accessing EAP services during work hours when, in the supervisor's judgment, the situation warrants this. For example, if an employee has no Personal Leave but clearly needs assistance before adequate Personal Leave hours can be accrued, the supervisor can contact the Director of Department of Finance and Administration and request administrative leave to cover the time needed for the employee to access the EAP.
- E. Employees deemed to require immediate intervention due to work-related critical incidents (e.g., sexual harassment, workplace violence, death of a coworker) will be granted administrative leave to access EAP services.
- F. In-services are brief training sessions performed by an EAP representative

to address work-related topics and can strengthen the work environment and work relationship. In-services can be scheduled through your EAP Coordinator on select topics as deemed necessary. Examples of some common topics are: Team Building, Stress Management, Anger Management, Depression, Burnout, Keeping Healthy, Grief, Violence in the Work Place, etc.

IV. Cancellations and No Shows

Cancellations and no shows result in lost time and resources for the EAP and their providers. Consequently, any employee seeking EAP services will be responsible for notifying the provider as soon as possible if he/she cannot keep a scheduled appointment.

V. Confidentiality

The success of the EAP depends upon employees feeling secure in the fact that all information related to participation in the EAP is kept strictly confidential. This includes all communications between the employee and the supervisor, the employee and the EAP coordinator, the employee and the EAP provider, including employee inquiries about the EAP as well as specific personal information shared by the employee. In the case of self-referrals, the EAP provider will not disclose any information to administration about the employee's participation without the expressed written consent of the employee.

VI. Follow-up of Administratively Referred Employees

- A. In the case of administrative/supervisory referral in lieu of disciplinary action, the administration/supervisor does have a need to know that the employee is cooperatively participating in EAP services. There is no need, however, for administration to know details of the employee's problem and related treatment. The employment status of the referred employee will be based upon subsequent job performance. If the referring supervisor elects, the EAP coordinator may serve as a liaison between the employee's supervisor and the EAP provider to facilitate reliable and confidential communication about employee participation.
- B. Where the supervisor elects, once treatment is completed, the EAP coordinator may arrange a discussion with the EAP provider, the employee, and the supervisor to review progress, completion of treatment, and any aftercare requirement. With appropriate "consent to release information" forms accomplished, the supervisor may elect to receive direct feedback from the EAP provider regarding completion of treatment and aftercare requirement and to review progress with the employee without the involvement of the EAP coordinator. Again, details of treatment are not necessary, only general information about requirements and performance progress will be discussed.

- C. When aftercare is completed, the employee will be encouraged to maintain periodic contact with the EAP provider to ensure the employee's well-being. If work performance should again begin to decline, the supervisor should immediately refer the employee back to the EAP provider together with following standard disciplinary procedures as appropriate. The EAP cannot be used in a revolving door fashion to avoid standard disciplinary action.

Acknowledgement of Receipt:

Print Name

Signature/Date

CC: Personnel File