VLT PROGRAM
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) What is the Voluntary Leave Time (VLT) Program?

The Voluntary Leave Time (VLT) Program is the revised version of the Voluntary Time-Off Program (VTO) as outlined in the Salary Resolution (see page 4). This version allows eligible (see #3 below) employees to take leave (subject to department approval) in a Fiscal Year, with a corresponding payroll deduction (for employees who are eligible for overtime) or for an adjustment in salary (for overtime exempt employees) spread over 26 pay periods.

Example: Jane Doe requests 40 VLT hours because she wants to spend time with her family during the holidays. Her department approves her request and submits it to Payroll by 5:00 p.m. on June 15th for the following Fiscal Year. Because it is VLT, instead of being docked 40 hours during the pay period in which she takes her voluntary leave, a pay deduction or adjustment is spread over the 26 pay periods in the Fiscal Year in which the leave takes place.

2) Is participation mandatory?

NO. Employee participation in the program is strictly voluntary.

3) Who is eligible to participate?

Full-time and part-time employees who have obtained permanent status, as well as employees in established unclassified positions, are eligible to participate. As with the VTO program, participation is not available to personnel in the Police Department; sworn safety personnel in the Fire Department; Bus Drivers; and in work units which rely extensively on the use of wages/contract employees to meet on-going operational requirements, as opposed to special or short-term projects.

4) How many hours of VLT can I request in a Fiscal Year?

You may request from 1 to 96 hours (subject to your department's approval). The maximum time that employees can request is 96 hours.

The hours can be taken as a block of time (Option 1), as two or more blocks of time, or intermittently throughout the Fiscal Year (Option 2).

5) Are there any conditions or restrictions for requesting or taking VLT?

- You must be eligible to participate.
- Your request is subject to department approval.
- Time off selected for either Option 1 or Option 2 is contingent upon the department's operational needs.
- VLT hours must be finalized and approved no later than the June 15th preceding the Fiscal Year (July 1 through June 30) when the leave is to be taken between July 1 and June 30);
- Any hours not used by July 1 will be forfeited (i.e., there are no rollovers or refunds).

Your appointing authority approved VLT hours may only be increased, (up to 96 hours) decreased, or cancelled under 3 circumstances: 1) Payroll has not yet processed your request; or 2) you go on an extended medical leave of absence during the Fiscal Year; or 3) department workload as determined by the appointing authority has increased substantially.

You may cancel the program if the department approves participation but reduces the number of hours requested. The cancellation must be done before payroll processing.

If the City were to impose an involuntary furlough on employees, any approved VLT would be used to offset the involuntary furlough.

6) For what purposes may I use my VLT?

Generally, VLT leave may be used for the same purposes as you would use annual leave, administrative leave, holiday, or vacation leave.

7) Will my benefits or employment status be affected if I elect to participate in this program?

NO. VLT hours taken are considered productive time for purposes of computing annual leave and vacation/sick leave accruals, holiday pay, promotion eligibility and step increase eligibility, and as service time for City retirement.

8) Is my take home pay reduced for the year?

YES. In order to provide pay for the additional time off, which would otherwise be leave without pay for non-exempt employees, your pay for 26 pay periods will be deducted or adjusted by the value equal to the amount of time that you have selected under the program. Example: You request 40 hours VLT and 1.54 hours would be deducted from each paycheck (It would be like being paid for 78.46 hours instead of 80). If you are eligible for and incur overtime during this period of time, it will be calculated using your regular pay rate – the rate of pay you would be receiving were you not in the program. (However, overtime cannot be a direct result of your participation or the participation of others in the program.)

9) How do I sign up?

Complete and submit a VLT Request form to your Supervisor. Depending upon your department's operational needs, your request may be approved as submitted, modified and approved, or declined by the appointing authority. It is recommended that you submit requests to your department as early as possible to allow time for review.

10) What is the deadline for submitting a request to participate?

In order to have your earnings adjustment spread over 26 pay periods in the following Fiscal Year, Payroll must receive your VLT request with proper departmental approvals no later than June 15th at 5:00 p.m.

11) What if I decide I want to increase or reduce the number of VLT hours I intend to take, or decide that I do not wish to participate in the program at all, after I submit my request and it is approved by my department head?

You may only change the number of requested and/or approved VLT hours, or cancel your participation in the program IF Payroll has not yet processed your request, OR you go out on an extended medical leave of absence during the Fiscal Year OR departmental workload has changed substantially as determined by the appointing authority.

You may withdraw from the program if the appointing authority reduces the amount of hours requested and the request has not been processed by payroll.

To make a change to the hours you elected or cancel participation, you must complete and submit another VLT Request form indicating "Change" or "Cancel" (as appropriate) on the form and submit to your supervisor.

If you go out on an approved medical leave of absence for an extended period of time and are not able to take your VLT, you should request that your department submit a memorandum explaining the circumstances that apply to the requested change. This memo must be submitted to Payroll prior to the end of the Fiscal Year.

If you go out on an extended medical leave and must exit the program, your pay will be adjusted if you have not yet used any time. If you have the ability to earn overtime pay and have used time under the program and your payroll deductions do not cover the amount of time used and paid for, you will be required to repay the difference. The City will agree upon a repayment plan with you.

If you leave City employment prior to the end of the program and have the ability to earn overtime pay, any amount due will be deducted from your final paycheck. If you have the ability to earn overtime and an amount is due you, you will receive it with your final pay.

12) What happens if my salary changes (e.g., I receive a step increase or take a voluntary demotion) after I have used all or part of my approved VLT hours?

Your earnings deduction/adjustment will be calculated based on the number of hours requested as VLT. If your salary or wages increase or decrease, your deduction/adjustment will increase or decrease correspondingly.

13) Can I use other types of paid (or unpaid) time-off during the same pay period as I use my VLT?

YES. You can use any combination of approved paid hours in a pay period. For example, if you would like to take one week off, you may use two days of VLT and three days of one or any combination of Annual Leave/Vacation/Administrative Leave (depending on your leave plan).

14) Whom should I contact if I have additional questions about the program?

Call Leslie Schoener, Senior Human Resources Analyst, at 621-6992.

15) Does the VLT replace the Voluntary Time-Off Program as outlined in the Salary Resolution?

YES. The change is effective July 1, 2009.

16) How does this work if I have a flexible work schedule?

A VLT day shall consist of your regularly scheduled work hours whether it is eight (8), nine (9), or ten (10) hours.

SALARY RESOLUTION - SECTION 23. –VOLUNTARY LEAVE TIME

Voluntary Leave Time (VLT) is a program by which an employee, with appropriate approval, can take additional time off during the Fiscal Year through a corresponding adjustment in pay. Except as noted in Section L. below, employees may be allowed to take up to ninety-six (96) hours of leave under this program. The program is intended to reduce City expenses by allowing employees to take additional leave time without being replaced. Employees would have regular adjustments to each paycheck. This program is not intended to increase City costs by offering an advantage to any employee at the City's expense. Participation in the program is subject to the following guidelines:

A. Participation in this program is not available to the following: Police Department; sworn safety personnel in the Fire Department; Bus Drivers; and in work units which rely extensively on the use of wages/contract employees to meet on-going operational requirements, as opposed to special or short-term projects.

B. Participation in the program is voluntary on the part of the employee, and must be approved by the appointing authority.

C. The employee must complete and submit a Voluntary Leave Time Request Form to participate in the program. The form must be submitted to and approved by the appointing authority. This request must specify the amount of time off and whether the time will be taken as a block or blocks of time, or intermittently.

D. The appointing authority, after reviewing the proposed leave/work schedule, may either approve, disapprove, or decrease the number of hours proposed to be taken off depending upon the operating needs of the department. If an appointing authority reduces the number of hours proposed to be taken off, the employee may withdraw the request to participate in the program. The department cannot fill behind an employee working a reduced work week with overtime, temporary help, acting pay (Municipal Code Section 3-260), or contract extra help.

E. Voluntary Leave Time cannot exceed ninety-six (96) hours in a Fiscal Year except as noted below in Section L.

F. Credits toward Health and Welfare and retirement and leave accruals to which the employee is entitled, shall continue as though the employee was not on the voluntary leave time program. The employee will contribute to the Retirement System as if the employee were working full-time.

G. This Voluntary Leave Time program shall:

a. Be available to employees who are otherwise available for the normal performance of their duties;

b. Be available only to employees who have been employed by the City for twelve (12) consecutive months and who are either in permanent positions with permanent status or are in established unclassified positions, except as noted in B. above or when waived in accordance with L. below;

c. Apply toward time in service for step advancement and toward seniority for purposes of layoff;

d. Be granted without requiring an employee to first use accumulated vacation, compensatory-time-off, or other paid leave time;

e. Not be available to an employee who is otherwise on leave without pay status;

f. Not be available to an employee who is on paid leave which is being exhausted prior to commencing other leave without pay;

g. Be taken on a scheduled basis that is mutually agreed upon by the appointing authority and the employee; and,

h. Not be available to any employee who is being counseled or disciplined under the FMC, or a City Attendance or Sick Leave Policy.

H. This program is not to result in overtime. However, an employee participating in this program, who is otherwise eligible for overtime, shall have overtime calculated on the basis of the MOU for the employee's Unit.

I. At the end of the Fiscal Year, the department and the City Manager's Office will review the impact that the Voluntary Leave Time program has had on department operations and the City's financial situation. The City, in its sole discretion, can discontinue the VLT program at any time, because of operating needs, or because the program no longer is beneficial to the City's financial situation.

J. Withdrawal from the program or a change in the number of hours requested shall only be granted if Payroll has not yet processed the request, the appointing authority has decreased the number of hours requested, the employee goes out on an extended medical leave of absence during the same fiscal year that the time off request was granted under this provision, or the appointing authority determines that increased workload will not allow the employee to take time off. If the employee withdraws from the program after the beginning of the fiscal year and before completion of the 26 pay periods, appropriate adjustments will be made to the employee's pay. If such adjustments require that an FLSA non-exempt employee reimburse the City, agreement must be reached on a repayment schedule. If an FLSA non-exempt employee's employment with the City ceases prior to completion of the program, any amount due on the program will be taken from the employee's final paycheck. If an employee does not withdraw from the program in accordance with these terms and agreed upon time is not taken, the time is forfeited and no reimbursement will be made. If the City imposes an involuntary furlough, employees may have approved VLT applied toward the involuntary furlough.

K. This program is not equivalent to job sharing or to PI or PPT positions.

L. At the discretion of the City Manager, in response to fiscal needs, the VLT hours maximum can be increased and may be extended to employees otherwise excluded in Section G. 2. above.

M. This program will only be in effect for FY10, unless otherwise extended at the sole discretion of the City.