



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

POLICY NO.

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TITLE:

**“REACH” PROGRAM (RESOURCE FOR
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE AND
COUNSELING HELP)**

APPROVED:


Kathleen N. A. Watanabe, Director

I. POLICY

It is recognized that personal problems such as family concerns, physical illness, emotional illness, and alcohol or drug dependency, can impair an employee's work performance or attendance. Many of these problems can be successfully dealt with, allowing the employee to return to productive functioning, provided assistance is offered at an early stage and referral is made to an appropriate form of care.

The State of Hawai'i is concerned about the health, safety, and well-being of its employees and wishes to make assistance available to employees desiring help on a confidential basis. Therefore, it is the policy of the State of Hawai'i to offer a program providing the following services to State government employees with personal problems affecting job performance, contingent on the availability of funds:

Diagnostic assessment
Information
Referral
Short-term counseling

This program shall be called the "Resource for Employee Assistance and Counseling Help," or REACH.

Participation in REACH shall not, in and of itself, jeopardize an employee's job security or consideration for job advancement.

II. RATIONALE

It is beneficial for the State to offer the REACH program for the following reasons:

- To help ensure the health, safety, and well-being of employees and, thereby, also increase the effectiveness of government operations.
- To encourage early problem identification/intervention and voluntary, self-referral by providing specific program services at no cost to employees.

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- To assist employees in dealing with their personal problems which are the cause of unsatisfactory job performance or misconduct.
- To provide an employee assistance program to complement the State's drug-free workplace efforts.

III. DEFINITIONS

“Counselor” means an individual(s) employed by an organization contracted by the Department of Human Resources Development to provide REACH counseling services to State government employees.

“Department Head” means the head of a department, as defined in Chapter 26: Executive and Administrative Departments, Hawai'i Revised Statutes.

“Director” means the Director of the Department of Human Resources Development.

“Employee” means any regular, temporary, and exempt employee of the Executive Branch of State government and such other employees who may be included in the State's contract with the REACH service provider; including certificated employees employed by the Department of Education and faculty employed by the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents. However, Student Hires shall be excluded from this definition for purposes of this policy.

“Family Member” means the employee's immediate family (e.g. spouse, child, parent, grandparent, and sibling) or significant other.

IV. SCOPE

This policy shall apply to all State government employees of the Executive Branch and such other employees who may be included under the State's contract with the REACH service provider, excluding Student Hires and employees covered by other employee assistance programs (e.g. all Department of Transportation employees).

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V. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. The director of HRD shall:

1. Develop, implement and administer policy and procedural guidelines governing the REACH program.
2. Contract for REACH services providers.
3. Publicize REACH services.
4. Oversee the program and monitor utilization/effectiveness of services.
5. Ensure the program’s compliance with federal and state laws.

B. The Counselor shall:

1. Provide initial diagnostic assessment services to employees; information; short-term counseling, if deemed appropriate; and referral to other appropriate care-giving resources when such referral is necessary.
2. Inform the employee, in advance, if it is expected that the employee will incur any expenses, such as for counseling fees incurred beyond the maximum hours covered by the employer and for fees incurred by other care-giving resources (See also Section VI.B., Expenses Not Covered).
3. Provide consulting services to supervisors, as may be authorized by contract.
4. Provide supervisory and employee training programs on how to utilize the REACH program, as may be authorized by contract.
5. Provide the Director with regular statistical reports regarding program utilization, without client identification information.

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6. Protect the confidentiality of the client/employee, as provided for by federal and state laws.
 7. Comply with all other terms of the applicable contract with the State.
- C. Department Heads shall:
1. Establish internal procedures, as may be necessary, for making supervisory referrals for REACH services.
 2. Ensure that REACH policy and publicity/promotional materials provided by the Director are made available within the department.
 3. Ensure that training programs are coordinated for departmental supervisors and employees, as appropriate.
- D. Supervisors shall:
1. Ensure that REACH policy and publicity/promotional materials are made available to all employees under their supervision.
 2. Ensure confidentiality for employees who are referred to and who utilize REACH services.
- E. Employees shall:
1. Keep appointments scheduled with the REACH Counselor and notify supervisor, in advance, when an appointment will involve time-off from work.
 2. Assume responsibility for any fees incurred which are not covered by the employer under the REACH program (See also Section VI.B., Expenses Not Covered).
 3. Comply with the existing requirements regarding sick leave when such leave is utilized.

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4. Provide confirmation of attendance for the first counseling session, if scheduled during work hours (See also Section VI.C.1., Time Off from Work for First Visit).

VI. GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. Expenses Covered

A limited number of counseling sessions or service time per year, as determined by contract, will be provided by the REACH Counselor for each eligible employee, at no cost to the employee. Services provided to family members who are the causes of or parties to the employee's problem may also be allowed and may be charged against the employee's maximum number of counseling sessions.

B. Expenses Not Covered

Some of the expenses which will not be covered by the employer are as follows (See also Section V.E.2., Responsibility of Employees):

1. Fees which may be charged by the REACH Counselor for services in excess of the maximum allowable under Section VI.A., Expenses Covered.
2. Fees which may be charged by another care-giving resource to which the employee is referred by the REACH Counselor for follow-up services. [Note: The employee may explore whether his/her medical plan carrier will cover such additional fees.]
3. Transportation, meals, lodging and other expenses which may be incurred by the employee, such as where services are sought or performed on another island from the employee's residence.

C. Time Off from Work

1. First Visit. An employee will be granted time off with pay up to one (1) hour for the first counseling session, plus a

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reasonable additional amount of travel time, if the visit is scheduled during working hours, has prior supervisory approval, and the employee provides confirmation of attendance. Such time off shall not be charged to any leave.

2. Follow-Up Visits. Subsequent appointments shall be scheduled for non-work hours unless otherwise authorized by the employee's supervisor. If scheduled during work hours, time off may be charged to the employee's accumulated sick, vacation, or compensatory time off, as appropriate. If the employee has no accumulated paid leave credits, such time off shall be charged to leave without pay.
3. Non-Work Hours Appointments. Prior supervisory authorization is not necessary for appointments scheduled during non-work hours. Such visits by the employee will not be subject to compensation nor will the State be liable for reimbursing the employee for his/her time.

D. Confidentiality

In order to protect the employee's right to privacy and provide protection against discriminatory practices and the fear of discrimination, all information, data, reports, records, summaries, tables or studies given to or prepared/assembled by the Counselor, shall be kept strictly confidential and not be made available to any individual or organization without the prior written approval of the employee and the State. In no event shall any employee's case records be incorporated into or be considered part of the employee's official personnel file.

- E. If any part of this policy is rendered or declared invalid by reason of any existing administrative rule, bargaining unit agreement, or state or federal law, such invalidation of such part or portion of this policy shall not invalidate the remaining portions thereof, and they shall remain in full force and effect.

VII. PROCEDURE

Referrals to the REACH program are to be made as follows.

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A. Self-Referral

1. **Employee** calls the REACH Counselor directly for confidential assistance with personal problems affecting job performance.
2. **REACH Counselor** either provides the necessary general information or referral assistance over the telephone, or arranges an appointment for a counseling session.
3. **Employee** requests prior approval from his/her supervisor where time off from work is necessary for any appointment. Such time off shall be approved by the supervisor if it will not cause undue hardship on office operations and if the appointment cannot be scheduled during non-work hours.
4. **REACH Counselor** advises employee when maximum number of hours of covered service time is reached. If additional services are necessary and the employee wishes to continue visits, Counselor notifies employee, in advance, that employee will be responsible for any fees.

B. Supervisor Referral

1. When a supervisor wishes to address a problem employee situation, **supervisor** consults with Departmental Personnel Officer/Representative (DPO) as to appropriate course of action to take and whether REACH referral is appropriate.
2. If the decision is to offer REACH services, **supervisor**:
 - a. Counsels employees about the decline in the employee's work performance and/or attendance or about a particular on-the-job incident. [Note: Since the discussion focuses on the specific work performance or incident, the supervisor should not speculate as to the cause of the performance decline with the employee, nor initiate discussion with the employee about any personal problem.]
 - b. Informs employee of the availability of REACH services, that such services shall be treated on a

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strictly confidential basis, and that employee may
accept or reject the services.

3. **Employee** makes decision whether to accept or reject REACH services. If the employee chooses to accept REACH services:
 - a. **Supervisor** calls the REACH Counselor and arranges an appointment time for the employee. If the supervisor makes the arrangements, he/she gives the employee, in writing, the appointment date/time, together with the address and phone number of the REACH office (see Exhibit A).
 - b. **REACH Counselor** advises the supervisor as to whether:
 - (1) The employee kept appointment as arranged.
 - (2) There is or is not a personal or health problem for which the counselor can provide help (but the nature of the problem will not be disclosed).
 - (3) The employee has accepted or rejected the offer of help.
 - (4) The employee will or will not require extended leave from work. If extended leave is required, the REACH Counselor provides the supervisor with informal periodic updates, with the employee's written consent. However, the existing requirement that the employee provide a physician's verification for all absences due to illness of five (5) or more consecutive days shall still be applicable.

VIII. REFERENCES

Chapters 76, 78, 378, and 396, Hawai'i Revised Statutes

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Title 14, Subtitle 1, Hawai`i Administrative Rules, *State of Hawai`i Human
Resources Rules*

Federal Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988, Pub. L. 100-690, Title V,
Subtitle D

Drug-Free Workplace Policy issued by the Department of Human
Resources Development

IX. ATTACHMENT

Attachment A: REACH (HEAS) Office Locations