

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
Executive Branch Policy
July 1, 1994
Revised October 2017

Introduction

In any organization, employees may have problems which interfere with their ability to perform their job in an acceptable manner. Conflicts with co-workers, repeated tardiness, low morale, absenteeism, or inadequate work performance may signal the presence of a personal problem. It is in the best interest of both the State and its employees that those persons be provided an opportunity to resolve those issues.

Policy Statement

It is the policy of the State of Iowa to promote and maintain the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to provide employees and their family members with the opportunity to receive confidential professional help to resolve personal problems that may affect job performance. This policy recognizes that such personal problems are capable of resolution and strongly encourages employees to seek assistance and appropriate means of resolving them.

Participation in the EAP will not protect an employee from disciplinary action, nor will participation jeopardize an employee's job or career. This policy does not alter or replace existing administrative policies, rules or contract agreements.

Program Description

The Employee Assistance Program is a confidential service to help employees and their family members with personal concerns which may affect work performance. The services, which are provided by a contracted private agency, include problem assessment, referral to appropriate community services, and short-term counseling. These services are offered at no cost to employees. Additionally, consultation services for supervisors are also available.

The EAP is available statewide to all Iowa state government employees. This policy covers executive branch employees except the Board of Regents employees at the three universities who have their own programs. Both supervisory and non-supervisory employees may utilize the services of the EAP. (Legislative and Judicial branches of state government have their own policies.)

It is the supervisor's responsibility to inform employees of this policy and encourage the appropriate use of the EAP.

Personal problems which may affect job performance and which are eligible for assistance through the EAP are:

- a. Alcohol/drug abuse. The State as an employer subscribes to the philosophy that alcohol and drug dependencies are treatable illnesses.
- b. Medical problems. These include physical, emotional problems, etc.
- c. Personal life issues. These include family/marital problems, death and dying issues, interpersonal conflicts, financial difficulties, stress, etc.
- d. Job-related problems. These concern the work environment, interpersonal relationships, and/or vocational dissatisfaction.

Management Consultations

Management consultation is a service offered by EAP for supervisors and managers for help in dealing with employee problems. An EAP professional with both counseling and management experience will assist in sorting out the problems and alternatives for supervisors or managers in dealing with these employees.

It is highly recommended that supervisors and managers utilize this service.

EAP Attendance

Visits with an EAP counselor may be self-initiated or upon recommendation of a supervisor, personnel officer, or union steward. **Under no circumstances can a supervisor mandate EAP attendance or participation.** Employees cannot be disciplined for refusal to attend.

Time

Employees may schedule appointments to meet with the EAP counselor during regular work time. To do so, it is necessary to first arrange with their supervisor for their time away from their workstation or post. Supervisors and employees will make every reasonable effort to schedule appointments at times compatible with the needs of the work unit. Employees will not be required to use accrued leave for the purpose of attending these meetings. Work time attendance does require the employee to sign a release of information with EAP so that documentation of attendance can be provided to the supervisor. Employees may also meet with an EAP counselor on their own time (non-work, vacation, or sick leave). Counselors are available evening and weekend hours in some locations.

Cost

The initial three visits to the EAP on a single incident or problem in a benefit year are provided to employees at no cost. Other services to which an employee may be referred may have a cost. These costs are the responsibility of the employee. The EAP will make every effort to refer employees to services compatible with their financial resources and health care insurance coverage.

Confidentiality

The EAP is CONFIDENTIAL. Information about an employee's use of the EAP will not be shared with anyone without a release signed by the employee. Such releases designate specifically what information can be released and to whom. The EAP counselors are the keeper of the confidential record, and the release must be signed with the counselor.

There are legal and ethical guidelines that may require exceptions to complete protection of information. In cases such as child/dependent abuse, adult abuse and life-threatening circumstances, the EAP counselor will determine how best to deal with each situation, and may release such information as necessary to meet a bona fide emergency or as required by law.

EAP records are for the counselor's use only and are not part of personnel records. Anonymous data will be collected to study program utilization. Departmental management staff and employees of the Iowa Department of Administrative Services will not have access to names of people seeking or using services. There is one exception, which allows the individual conducting financial audits and program evaluation access to client files for the purpose of audits. That person must sign a statement of confidentiality and may not identify, directly or indirectly, any individual client in any manner.

Contacting the EAP

To contact an EAP counselor, call 800-833-3031 or visit <http://www.powerflexweb.com/1063/login.html> and enter company code, "IOWA."