

ARTICLE 11
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Section 11.01 - General. Management agrees to continue the Department's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for employees with either personal or work-related concerns, including but not limited to: alcohol or drug abuse, mental illness, financial issues, or family situations. Participation in the program shall be voluntary.

Section 11.02 - Relationship to Disciplinary Action. The parties recognize that the program is designed to be carried out as a non-disciplinary procedure aimed at assisting employees who have health or personal concerns. If an employee requests assistance under the program, the responsible supervisory official shall give consideration to this fact in determining any appropriate disciplinary and/or adverse action based upon the employee's performance or conduct.

Section 11.03 - Training. Upon request, Management shall include Local Union representatives in employee briefing sessions or training and orientation programs so that there shall be mutual understanding of policy, referral procedures, and other elements of the program.

Section 11.04 - Employee Notification. The Agency shall advertise and emphasize the program in a prominent and permanent location on the employee home page. Notification shall include a statement of the purpose of the program and telephone numbers of the EAP Counselors. In addition, HUD will notify employees of the EAP program on an annual basis. Although the existence and functions of counseling and referral programs shall be publicized to employees, no employee shall be required to participate or be penalized for merely declining referral to an available counseling service.

Section 11.05 - Leave. When an employee requests use of EAP for any counseling appointment that requires an absence from duty, the employee must obtain the appropriate leave approval or make other appropriate arrangements with the supervisor. In order to facilitate the use of EAP, employees shall be entitled to Administrative Leave for up to 3 (three) visits of two (2) hours per visit, per calendar year. The Agency may approve additional leave, including Administrative Leave, if necessary.

Section 11.06 - Confidentiality. Whenever an employee participates in the program, the content of the employee's discussion and participation shall be treated as private and confidential, unless precluded by law. The agency may require verification of attendance at an EAP session when Administrative Leave has been granted.

Section 11.07 - EAP Counselors. Employees in all HUD offices shall have access to the EAP program, including a toll free number to contact qualified EAP counselors.