



# United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
Washington, DC 20240

September 19, 2023

## Memorandum

To: Solicitor  
Inspector General  
Assistant Secretaries  
Heads of Bureaus and Equivalent Offices

From: Jennifer A. Ackerman  
Director, Office of Human Capital  
Deputy Chief Human Capital Officer

Subject: Department of the Interior Emergency Leave Transfer Program for Federal  
Employees Adversely Affected by Hurricane Idalia 2023

An emergency leave transfer program (ELTP) has recently been established to assist employees adversely affected by the destruction caused by Hurricane Idalia. The memorandum from the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) authorizing the ELTP can be found here: [Emergency Leave Transfer for Federal Employees Adversely Affected by Hurricane Idalia \(Chief Human Capital Officers Council Memorandum\)](#)

Consistent with OPM's regulations at 5 CFR Part 630, Subpart K, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) has delegated the authority to administer the ELTP for DOI employees to the Interior Business Center (IBC). The ELTP allows employees to donate unused annual leave to the program for use by employees who have been adversely affected by a disaster or emergency. An employee is considered to be adversely affected if the disaster or emergency has caused severe hardship to such a degree that the employee's absence from work is required. In addition, an employee may use donated leave under the ELTP to assist a family member who has been adversely affected by a disaster or emergency, provided such family member has no reasonable access to other forms of assistance.

An emergency leave recipient must use donated leave for purposes related to the major disaster for which the emergency leave recipient was approved and may not receive more than 240 hours of donated annual leave at any one time from the ELTP. Donated annual leave may be substituted retroactively for any leave without pay (LWOP) used by the emergency leave recipient during a major disaster or emergency or may be used to liquidate an indebtedness incurred by the emergency leave recipient for advanced annual or sick leave. Donated annual leave **may not** be retroactively substituted for accrued annual or sick leave used because of the emergency.

Employees interested in becoming emergency leave recipients must submit a written application, using the [OPM Form 1637](#), "Application to Become a Leave Recipient under the Emergency

Leave Transfer Program.” Applications to become an emergency leave recipient must be submitted to the Bureau/Office Servicing Human Resources Office (SHRO) by October 20, 2023. Bureau/Office Human Resources Directors (or their designee(s)) must review and either approve or disapprove applications to become an emergency leave recipient based on evidence that is determined to be administratively acceptable. The SHRO will recommend the total amount of donated annual leave to be transferred to each emergency leave recipient. The amount may vary according to individual needs.

Employees who wish to donate annual leave to the ELTP must complete an [OPM Form 1638](#), “Request to Donate Annual Leave Under the Emergency Leave Transfer Program,” and submit the completed form to their SHRO. Employees may donate up to 104 hours of annual leave in a leave year to the ELTP.

The SHRO will submit the completed OPM Forms to the attention of Rebecca Romero, IBC Payroll Operations Branch Chief, at [rebecca\\_n\\_romero@ibc.doi.gov](mailto:rebecca_n_romero@ibc.doi.gov) for processing.

If donated leave is to be applied to advanced leave or LWOP, this must be specified on the recipient’s documentation. Donated annual leave that is not used by emergency leave recipients will be returned to the emergency leave donors when the emergency as a whole has ended.

Questions regarding this guidance can be directed to Joy Buhler, Office of Human Capital, at [joy\\_buhler@ios.doi.gov](mailto:joy_buhler@ios.doi.gov).

cc: Bureau Human Capital Officers and HR Officers/Directors