

# HEBER PUBLIC UTILITY DISTRICT REPORT TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**MEETING DATE:** December 15, 2022

**FROM:** Laura Fischer, General Manager

**SUBJECT:** Repeal the Current COVID Leave Compensation Policy and Procedures.

**ISSUE:** Shall the Board of Directors repeal current COVID leave compensation policy and procedures?

**General Manager’s Recommendation:**

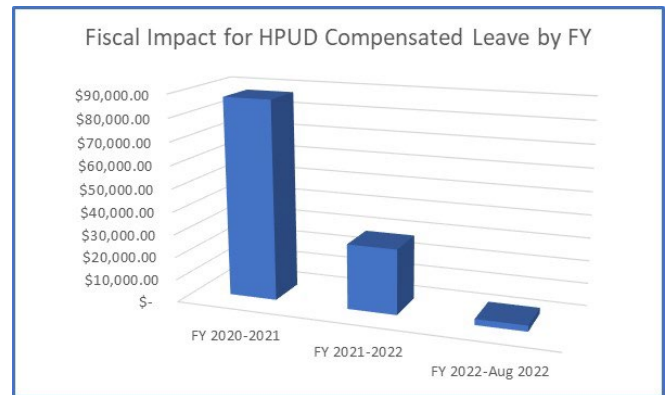
Repeal COVID leave compensation policy and procedures established and approved March 19, 2020.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

FY 2020-2021 total Fiscal Impact: \$87,327.81

FY 2021-2022 total Fiscal Impact: \$28,478.84

FY 2022-Aug. 2022 Fiscal Impact: \$ 2,590.83



**BACKGROUND:**

At the March 19, 2020 Board meeting the Governor had just declared a State Emergency due to the COVID Pandemic, and as a response, the Board authorized the General Manager to comply with regulations, mandates, and guidelines as they are made public. At that meeting staff recommended that the General Manager executes mutual aid agreements that are in the best interest of the public and the HPUD, modify staff work hours without loss of pay to our employees, waive late fees and suspend water shutoffs, and make any changes as may be necessary to HPUD operations in all departments to ensure continued services and protect the health and safety of our employees and the good citizens of Heber.

**DISCUSSION:**

Since that time, HPUD has reversed the waiver of late fees and water shutoffs, changed our operations to open our office to customers, and our employees are back on full work schedules.

The only item that we haven’t changed back to “normal” operations, is the fact that if one of our employees gets COVID and is required to take time off work due to that illness, they are not required to use sick leave accrued. As you can see from the chart

in the Fiscal Impact section, the number of hours has dropped significantly this Fiscal Year.

The State of California no longer recognizes COVID as a reason for declaring an emergency. It is my recommendation that the policy and practice of employees taking time off due to COVID without using sick leave be repealed and replaced with the following:

Should an HPUD employee test positive for COVID or any other contagious illness or virus, they should stay home until they do not have a fever, are feeling well enough to work, and test negative for COVID with a home test or from a medical professional.

Employees will be required to use their sick leave (or other eligible leave) during this time. HPUD will no longer allow employees to stay home with full compensation and not use sick leave.

Should the Board approve the repeal of current COVID leave compensation. No modification to our personnel rules and regulations are needed. The COVID compensation leave was a direct result of the Pandemic and was intended to be in place to mitigate any negative impact to our employees when they were required to take mandatory time off to stop the spread of COVID.

**CONCLUSION:**

It is staff's recommendation that the policy and procedures for COVID leave compensation be repealed and the following policy and practice be implemented starting January 2023.

Should an HPUD employee test positive for COVID or any other contagious illness or virus, they should stay home until they do not have a fever, are feeling well enough to work, and test negative for COVID with a home test or from a medical professional.

Employees will be required to use their sick leave (or other eligible leave) during this time. HPUD will no longer allow employees to stay home with full compensation and not use sick leave.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

- 1) Do not repeal the policy and procedure regarding employee COVID leave compensation, which will continue to have a negative fiscal impact to the District.
- 2) Provide alternate direction to staff.

Respectfully Submitted,

Laura Fischer, General Manager