

Emergency Leave Transfer Program (ELTP) Frequently Asked Questions

General Questions about the ELTP:

Q: What is the ELTP?

A: The [ELTP \(or Emergency Leave Transfer Program\)](#) is a leave bank to assist federal employees for whom major disasters or emergencies have “caused severe hardship to the employee or (the employee’s) family member to such a degree that the employee’s absence from work is required.” The purpose of the program is to enable employees who suffered severe hardship to take the time off they need for medical or other reasons to recover from the affects of a major disaster or emergency without having to use their own leave. Under the ELTP, employees may donate **Annual Leave or Restored Annual Leave** to the ELTP, to which employees who meet the severe hardship criteria may apply for leave to cover absences directly related to the event.

Q: When will the ELTP terminate?

A: The ELTP will terminate when HHS or OPM determines that the major disaster or emergency has terminated.

Q: Is the Agency keeping records of how much leave is donated?

A: The Agency is keeping all records of donors and recipients. These records are being maintained as a system of records, which fall under the Privacy Act. Therefore, the specific information about the ELTP will not be available, however a gross tally of hours donated and used will be available at the termination of the emergency.

General Questions about Donating Leave to the ELTP:

Q: How can I donate annual leave to the HHS ELTP?’

A: You [or your timekeeper or administrative officer (AO) on your behalf] may donate the leave through ITAS. Just click on the left menu item “Donate Leave.” Once in that screen, choose the VLTP recipient set up as “ELTP, HHS.” Select a leave type (either annual leave or restored annual leave, as appropriate) and insert the number of hours you wish to donate. Click on “OK.” You and your Leave Approving Official (LAO) will receive an e-mail with information regarding your donation. Once your LAO approves the donation, the hours will be deducted from your ITAS leave balance. Since this is a manual process with DFAS, it may take up to two pay periods for the leave to be reflected on your Leave and Earnings Statement.

Q: How much annual leave may I donate to the ELTP?

A: The minimum number of hours of annual leave that can be donated is 1 hour. The maximum number of hours of annual leave that can be donated in a leave year is 104 hours.

Q: If I do not donate all 104 hours of leave, can I contribute again at a later date?

A: Yes, you would have to follow the procedures again and you can donate up to 104 hours in a leave year. If the emergency continues into the next leave year, a second 104 hours could be donated.

Q: Can I donate some of my accrued sick leave to the ELTP?

A: No. According to government-wide regulations for the ELTP, employees may **ONLY** donate accrued annual leave to the program.

Q: May I give my donated annual leave to a specific individual, as is the case under the Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (VLTP)?

A: No. According to government-wide regulations, donations to an ELTP **may not be directed to a specific individual**. Donations made to an ELTP are applied towards a central pool to which all applicants apply.

Q: What if the annual leave I donate to the ELTP does not get used?

A: If you are still employed by HHS when the ELTP ends, you will receive a proportional share of any unused leave remaining in the bank. When this occurs, you may elect to have the leave restored in the current leave year or on the first day of the succeeding leave year.

Q: If another emergency is declared and an additional ELTP is established to respond to the emergency, can unused donations be rolled over into the new ELTP?

A: No. According to government-wide regulations, donations made to an ELTP for one declared major disaster or emergency cannot be used to cover a different major disaster or emergency.

Q: If I donate annual leave to the ELTP, may I also donate to the VLTP?

A: Yes. Many employees still have medical or family needs that are not related to the events of a major disaster or emergency and would welcome your help. You may find out who these individuals are by viewing their names in ITAS.

- Q: If I have already given the maximum number of hours, can I donate this year to someone in the VLTP?**
- A:** Yes. You may still donate between 1 hour and 104 hours to the ELTP. Donations made to the ELTP do not count against the limitation to the donations under VLTP.
- Q: I am a member of the Commissioned Corps. Can I donate annual leave to the ELTP?**
- A:** No. Commissioned Corps members are not eligible to participate in the HHS ELTP, either as a leave donor or as a recipient.
- Q: Whom can I call if I have other questions about donating leave to the HHS ELTP?**
- A:** Additional information on the HHS ELTP is available by contacting your Timekeeper, Administrative Officer or [ITAS Coordinator](#).

General Questions about Using Donated Leave:

- Q: Can I use ELTP leave to assist a family member?**
- A:** The hierarchy of those eligible to become a leave receipt is as follows: 1) employees directly impacted and affected by a major disaster or emergency and who as a result are required to be absent from work; 2) employees who have family members directly impacted by a major disaster or emergency and want to assist in a relief effort, provided the family members have no reasonable access to other forms of assistance; and 3) employees with family members who are called up as reservists or as a part of an emergency response team and whose absence causes significant disruption to existing family arrangements such that the employees are required to be absent from work.
- Q: What is a family member?**
- A: Family Member:** The definition of family member covers a wide range of relationships, including spouse; parents; parents-in-law, children; brothers; sisters; grandparents; grandchildren; step parents; step children; foster parents; foster children; guardianship relationships; same sex and opposite sex domestic partners; and spouses or domestic partners of the aforementioned, as applicable. The list of family members for whom an employee may request donated annual leave under the ELTP (as well as important associated definitions for the terms son or daughter, parent, domestic partner, and committed relationship) may be found in the OPM fact sheet entitled [Definitions Related to Family Member and Immediate Relative for Leave Purposes](#).

General Questions about Receiving Donated Leave:

Q: Who is eligible to receive donated leave under the HHS ELTP?

A: To be eligible as a recipient under the ELTP, an employee or an employee's family member must be adversely and directly affected by a major disaster or emergency which causes severe hardship to the employee or the employee's family member to such a degree that the employee's absence from work is required. An emergency leave recipient may only use donated annual leave to care for a family member if that family member has no reasonable access to other forms of assistance.

Q: Do I have to exhaust all my own annual and sick leave before I can receive leave donated under ELTP?

A: No. Unlike the VLTP, you need not to have exhausted all your own annual or sick leave before receiving leave donated under ELTP.

Q: Do I have to have a medical condition (or be caring for a family member who has one) because of a major disaster or emergency in order to apply to receive leave under ELTP?

A: No. The ELTP covers more than just medical conditions (e.g., time you might need to file insurance claims for lost property or assist a family member relocate from a major disaster or emergency area). Even if your condition (or that of a family member) is medical, you do not need to present medical documentation in order to receive donated leave under ELTP. You need only to demonstrate "severe hardship resulting in required absence from work."

Q: How do I apply to become an ELTP Recipient?

A: Submit an OPM Form 1637, Application to Become a Leave Recipient under the Emergency Leave Transfer Program and OPM Form 71, Request for Leave or Approved Absence (both can be found on the OPM website www.opm.gov/forms) to your supervisor for approval. Only 240 hours can be requested at a time. Your supervisor determines if you meet the conditions for receiving donated leave under ELTP and makes a recommendation to approve or disapprove the application. Forms are then forwarded to the NIH ELTP Coordinator (Shirley Flottum – 31/B3C23 or faxed to 301-480-6146).

Q: Is there a limit on how much leave a person can receive under the ELTP?

A: Yes. You may not receive more than 240 hours of donated leave at one time. If you need more than that amount, you would have to reapply.

Q: What happens if my application to be an ELTP Recipient is approved?

A: The HHS ELTP Committee will notify the NIH ELTP Coordinator within 10 business days of receiving the package. The NIH ELTP Coordinator will notify you or your representative via email, fax, phone, etc., and follow up with a cover letter and copy of written decision memo of approval. The number of hours granted must be used within one full month of your estimated end date. You can request an extension, otherwise the leave will be returned to the ELTP for redistribution.

Q: What happens if my application to be an ELTP Recipient is disapproved?

A: The HHS ELTP Committee will provide a memo to the NIH Coordinator stating the reason for disapproval. The NIH ELTP will contact you or your representative and follow up with a written decision letter explaining the disapproval and the procedure to request reconsideration.

Q: What if I disagree with the decision of the HHS ELTP Committee?

A: If you disagree with the HHS ELTP Committee's decision concerning your application, you can request a review by the HHS ELTP Reconsideration Committee.

Q: Can I use ELTP to volunteer locally or on site?

A: ELTP, as described above, is only for those employees directly affected or employees whose family members were directly affected by a major disaster or emergency. ELTP cannot be used in order to "volunteer" to help the situation.

Q: The application form asks me to say how much donated leave I need. What if I do not use all the leave I am given?

A: You are also asked to estimate over what period of time you would use the leave (e.g., do you need to take a full week off to help family relocate or 40 hours over an extended period to handle a series of doctors visits?). If you have not used all the leave you were granted within a month of your estimated end date, you will be asked whether the time needs to be extended. If the original need for the leave is over, any remaining leave will be returned to the leave bank to be distributed.

Q: I suffered a "severe hardship ... resulting in required absence from work" as a result from a major disaster or emergency and had to use my own leave to deal with the hardship. Under the ELTP, can I have my leave restored?

A: No. According to the government-wide regulations, donated leave under an ELTP may not be used to restore annual or sick leave previously used. However, ELTP leave can be used to 1) liquidate a negative leave balance caused by being advanced leave or 2) restore you to a pay status for periods of time when you were on leave without pay

(LWOP). If you were on LWOP or advanced leave, you should apply to the ELTP for restoration.

Q: I am a reservist who was called to active duty status. Normally I would use my own leave to cover the time I am away from my regular job and preserve my salary. May I apply for leave under the ELTP instead?

A: No. Being called to active duty does not fit the definition of a “severe adverse effect” which includes “loss of life or property, serious injury, or mental illness as a result of a direct threat to life or health.” However, if your absence will cause a significant disruption to existing family arrangements such that another member of your family, who is also an HHS employee, is required to be absent from work, the individual may apply to the ELTP.

Q: If the donated leave is not all completely used, will it be returned to the donor?

A: If the amount of donated leave is not completely used by the approved recipients of HHS, it may be requested to be transferred to other Executive Agencies to assist their employee directly affected by a major disaster or emergency.

Q: Whom do I call if I have other questions about applying to receive leave donated under the ELTP?

A: Additional information on the HHS ELTP is available by contacting your Timekeeper, Administrative Office or [ITAS Coordinator](#).