

Catastrophic Leave Bank

Health Emergency Leave Program (HELP)

WHAT IS HELP and what can it do for me and others?

SAEA's Catastrophic Leave Bank (CLB), also known as the Health Emergency Leave Program (HELP), allows SAEA members to request additional days of paid leave due to a potentially fatal medical emergency or illness. This program allows continued income and health benefits when you need it most. When all other leaves have been exhausted, this program comes into play, but only if you have contributed three days to the bank. What's in it for me? A maximum of 180 days may be granted in a member's lifetime. You may never need this assistance, but there will be colleagues who may. We often want to help, but don't know how, this is the avenue, negotiated with the District, to make it possible.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Employee must work a minimum of a 60% contract and be a permanent employee
- Employee must sign up and donate one sick day a year for 3 consecutive years to HELP

BENEFIT QUALIFICATIONS

- Days will be deducted and verified by the SAUSD Payroll Department
- Must be out of a regular work assignment for more than fifteen consecutive work days
- Use all accrued sick days
- Use all 100 days of differential pay
- Provide written diagnosis from a licensed medical doctor
- Pre-existing conditions may not qualify

WHAT AILMENTS QUALIFY FOR HELP

- Life-threatening or potentially fatal illness or injury
- Severe, debilitating complications resulting from surgery

Scan the image below or go to <http://bit.ly/HELP-2024-25> for an electronic copy of the enrollment form. Download, print, and sign to complete.

HOW TO ENROLL

- Complete and sign (wet signature) the enclosed Enrollment Form
- Mail, fax, or email the completed signed form to the SAEA Office (District Mail may be used)
- **If you are already a member of HELP, please do not reapply.** Call the SAEA office or email the HELP committee if you are not sure if you enrolled in HELP.

MORE INFORMATION

- Contact your Site Representative
- Call SAEA at 714-542-6758
- Email to: helpsaea@gmail.com



* *Collective Bargaining Agreement Article 10.6*

OPEN ENROLLMENT NOW THROUGH SEPTEMBER 30, 2024
HELP IS HERE FOR YOU!

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Enrollment Form

To the Santa Ana Educators' Association Office:

Beginning this 2024-2025 school year, I authorize the Payroll Department of the Santa Ana Unified School District to deduct a total of three (3) days of sick leave from my annual leave allotment. I understand that one (1) day of sick leave will automatically be deducted each year until I contribute a total of three (3) days. These days will serve as my contribution for membership in the Health Emergency Leave Program (HELP) also known as the Catastrophic Leave Bank (CLB).

Cancellation of membership in the CLB will only occur once submitted in writing and received by both SAUSD payroll department and the SAEA HELP Committee. The authorization shall continue in force until I revoke it or the maximum number of days have been donated.

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Member Full Legal First Name

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Last Name

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Prior Name, If Any

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SAUSD Employee Number

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SSN Last 4

I am a certificated, permanent employee.

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Personal Email Address

School/Work Site

Role

Grade

Member Signature (Please use black or blue ink.)

Date

Please return this copy no later than Monday, September 30, 2024

Mail this signed and completed form to the SAEA office (District mail can be used),
fax to SAEA office at (714) 558-7333 or email signed form to helpsaea@gmail.com

Important: Contributed days will not be credited back. **If you are not sure if you have enrolled in the past, please contact SAEA at (714) 542-6758 or helpsaea@gmail.com.** Please keep a copy of this form for your records. A confirmation acknowledging your enrollment will be sent by the SAEA HELP Committee.

Article X – SAEA / SAUSD Collective Bargaining Agreement

10.6 Catastrophic Leave

- 10.6.1 Catastrophic leave shall be defined as a life-threatening serious illness or injury that incapacitates a unit member in excess of fifteen (15) consecutive duty days. A physician's verification that the illness or injury is life-threatening shall be provided.
- 10.6.2 To be eligible for catastrophic leave, the unit member shall have exhausted all fully paid sick leave.
- 10.6.3 A unit member shall not be eligible for catastrophic leave during the period of time the unit member is receiving full pay under Industrial Accident or Illness Leave (10.2.8).
- 10.6.4 Only full-time unit members with eight (8) or more days of accumulated sick leave shall be permitted to donate days toward catastrophic leave.
- 10.6.5 The Association shall establish a Catastrophic Leave Bank and shall establish procedures for administering the Bank.
- 10.6.6 Requests for catastrophic leave shall be filed with the Association.
- 10.6.7 Requests for catastrophic leave do not absolve an employee from providing all necessary documents verifying illness and authorizing absence from the District due to illness.
- 10.6.8 The Association shall inform the Human Resources Office of the names of unit members who have donated sick leave days and how many days they have donated.
- 10.6.9 The Association shall provide the District upon written request, information and documentation regarding eligibility for catastrophic leave and related matters.
- 10.6.10 A unit member may file a grievance alleging a violation of sections 10.6.2, 10.6.3, and 10.6.4 only.
- 10.6.11 Catastrophic Leave shall be reopened at the request of either party.

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Here is a real-life example of how this negotiated Catastrophic Leave Bank benefit assisted a fellow member:

The day I received the news that my HELP application had been approved, I was in the middle of the evaluation process for a heart transplant. My differential days were dwindling, and a sense of panic about my future was setting in. It was my understanding that once I exhausted my differential days, I would be placed on a 39-month "rehire list" and I would cease to be an SAUSD employee.

When I got the word that my application had been accepted, it was as if I had won the lottery! The burden of worrying about both my employment status and paycheck was lifted, allowing me to focus on my health and remain an active member of SAEA.

My first encounter with the Health Emergency Leave Program (HELP) was during a "Welcome to Santa Ana" orientation. I hate to admit I procrastinated and it took me several years to sign up. It wasn't until I saw a flier at an SAEA workshop that I began donating my three days of sick leave. At the time, my intent was to help other teachers in need. I never, in my wildest dreams, ever imagined I would be the one in need of assistance.

In 2017, I started experiencing heart flutters, chest tightness, dizziness, and other concerning symptoms. I ignored them until they landed me in the Emergency Room. (A tip: take your health seriously; seek evaluation if you have any doubts or concerns!) That Thanksgiving, I was diagnosed with heart failure and received an internal defibrillator (ICD). I was able to return to work, improved my diet, and incorporated exercise into my life. I felt great, but I was also aware that the clock was ticking – once diagnosed with heart failure, you have roughly five years until your heart completely fails.

Fast forward to February 28, 2023. I received my new heart! However, I couldn't return to work for the new school year as I'm still in recovery from the transplant. It hasn't been an easy journey, but with a positive attitude and a heart full of gratitude, I continue to persevere. I owe my presence today to a generous organ donor, SAEA members who contribute to the leave bank, and the incredible healthcare professionals – nurses, doctors, and surgeons – who were all taught by teachers!

Reflecting on my experience, I can't emphasize enough how vital the HELP program is in providing peace of mind. A huge shoutout to all those who participate and contribute sick days. It truly takes a village! Think of the SAEA HELP program as the most inexpensive and most meaningful insurance you will ever purchase with the simple gifting of your sick days. By contributing just three sick days over a span of three years, you can secure your membership.

Finally, if you haven't already, please consider becoming an organ donor – you could save a life just like mine was saved. ❤️ Visit registerme.org or www.DonateLifeCalifornia.org