

TOWN OF MANCHESTER, CONNECTICUT

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

There are times when we, or members of our family, experience serious problems in our personal lives and, sometimes, these difficulties can affect our abilities at work. To offer you a way to overcome such problems, the Town of Manchester provides a voluntary, confidential counseling service at no cost to the employee.

The Town has contracted with two Employee Assistant Program (EAP) providers, **Wheeler EAP and Public Safety EAP**. Both programs are available to help employees and their immediate families deal with personal problems, which may be created by marital or family difficulties, emotional disturbances, alcohol and/or drug dependencies or financial burdens. The program offered by Public Safety EAP is for those employees in the Police and Fire Departments. The program offered by Wheeler EAP is for all other employees.

Services provided by the EAP are short term. Counselors will meet with you and/or your family member between one and four times. They will review your concerns, explore with you ways to help you resolve your problems, and suggest a plan of action. If on-going counseling is recommended, the EAP will make every effort to refer you or family members to an appropriate counselor or agency near your home or work area.

Wheeler EAP counselors are available to see you in their offices in Plainville, Monday through Friday, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., plus two evenings per week. In addition, an answering service is available to receive calls 24 hours a day. Sessions can also be scheduled in Town meeting rooms - if you find this more convenient.

The Public Safety EAP can be reached by calling 1-888-327-1060 at any time. Counselors are available to see you at one of their conveniently located offices throughout the state.

The Wheeler EAP office can be reached at 1-800-275-3327. In addition, the attached Town of Manchester policy and procedure statements explain the program in more detail.

Human Resources Department
Town of Manchester
647-3126

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POLICY

The Town of Manchester recognizes that a wide range of problems not directly associated with the job function can affect an employee's work performance. These problems may include alcohol or chemical dependency, psychological difficulties, family problems, or a variety of other personal concerns. In some instances, employees work through such problems on their own. In others, employees may need outside help to overcome the difficulties. Unless they can obtain such help, job performance may be affected to a point where disciplinary action (including discharge) may be necessary, or where employees themselves leave the work force.

The Town believes that it is in the interest of the employee, the employee's family and the Town organization as a whole, to make outside, confidential assistance available to those employees who seek aid with such problems. Employees who make use of such assistance may improve performance, correct performance problems and improve the overall quality of their lives.

The decision to accept assistance is always the responsibility of the employee and information provided by the employee to the Employee Assistance Program remains confidential between the employee and the program. It is not the desire nor intent of the Town to become involved in the personal concerns of employees. It is the intent to minimize, as much as possible, job performance problems related to personal concerns. Supervisors who work with an employee, experiencing performance problems may recommend that the employee seek assistance, or employees may seek assistance on their own. The availability of this program will not affect existing disciplinary or grievance procedures. Further, it may help employees avoid any job-related problems by providing a method for them to deal with personal problems by providing a method for them to deal with personal problems in a constructive and positive manner.

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PROCEDURE

1. All regular employees of the Town are eligible to use the Employee Assistance Program. Immediate family members of eligible employees may also use the service. Immediate family is defined to include those persons covered by or eligible for coverage as dependents under the group insurance plan.
2. Any employee may contact the EAP counselor at any time to discuss a personal problem. Instructions on contacting counselors are included below. Employees may, if necessary, take time off during normal work hours to visit the EAP counselor, under the same guidelines now used to allow time off for "medical, dental or eye" care.
3. A supervisor with an employee whose performance is deteriorating should first take normal disciplinary actions and follow normal procedures in documenting performance problems. He or she should not attempt to diagnose or counsel the employee regarding personal problems. He or she can, at any time, contact the EAP counselor for consultation regarding performance problems encountered. At any time following the identification of performance problems, the supervisor may also recommend to an employee that he or she seek the help of the EAP counselor. A supervisor cannot require an employee to use the EAP program, and no disciplinary action can be taken against an employee for failing to use the program.
4. When an employee contacts the EAP counselor, the counselor will make an initial evaluation of the problem and, generally, will refer the employee to an appropriate resource to help resolve the problem.
5. All information provided to the counselor by an employee is completely confidential. In instances where an employee has sought assistance on his or her own, no information (not even the name of the person seeking help) goes to the Town without express written permission from the employee. In instances where the supervisor has referred an employee to the program, feedback to the supervisor is limited to whether or not the employee came in for an evaluation appointment and whether or not he or she is following the recommendations made.
6. The EAP counselor will follow up with employees to make sure that they receive the help needed. In instances when the employee, was referred by a supervisor the counselor will also follow up with the supervisor to determine if job performance problems have been corrected. The Town will receive a general report showing the number of persons participating in the program. This report will not include names or any personal information that could be used to identify participants.
7. Wheeler EAP counselors are available at their office at ***91 Northwest Drive, Plainville, CT 06062***, Monday thru Friday, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., plus two evenings per week. In-town sites for appointments may also be arranged as needed. In addition, there is a 24 hour-a-day answering service staffed by a professional counselor to provide information or to set up an appointment. Call them at 1-800-275-3327.