

**Item Title:** Amendment of the Wake County Personnel Code of Ordinances for the Establishment of Additional Sick Leave

**Specific Action Requested:**

**That the Board of Commissioners amends the Wake County Personnel Code of Ordinances for the establishment of Additional Sick Leave, effective December 1, 2023.**

**Item Summary:**

**Purpose:** The Board of Commissioners reviews and approves changes to the personnel ordinance.

**Background:** Current employment market conditions have made recruiting and retaining employees a challenge. Organizations are in tight competition for the same top talent and are having to find more and more creative ways to recruit and retain employees.

To assist in attracting and retaining a talented workforce, staff recommends the establishment of Additional Sick Leave effective December 1, 2023, which grants up to 60 days of additional sick leave to benefit eligible employees in their 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> year of service with Wake County.

**Board Goal:** This action supports Great Government Goal 3: Maintain a culture that values and supports our employees.

**Fiscal Impact:** Salaries and benefits for FY 2024 are appropriated in the annual operating budget. After implementation, HR will collect data to evaluate the results of this additional benefit. Budget and Management Services and Human Resources staff will evaluate the potential budget impact, and any ongoing expenditures will be included as part of future annual budget processes.

**Additional Information:**

As a result of the “Great Resignation,” 46.6 million people left their jobs in 2022, and according to the December 2022 report from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of job openings totaled 11 million. Wake County has not been immune to these market factors. Wake County’s 2022 turnover rate was 15.48%. More than 65% of Wake County employees have between 0-10 years of service and nearly 80% of turnover stems from employees leaving who have less than 10 years of service. The current vacancy rate is 11%.

Wake County must be as dynamic as the market to sustain operations and continues to research strategies to recruit and retain employees. Offering paid leave benefits is a low to no cost strategy. Wake County currently offers the following leave types:

<b>Paid Leave Type</b>	<b>Amount of Leave</b>
Sick Leave	12 days per year
Annual Leave	14-26 days per year based on years of service
Bereavement Leave	40 hours per year
Community Involvement Leave	16 hours per year
Wellness Leave	2 days per year
Parental Leave	8 weeks
Family Illness Leave	3 weeks
Holidays	13 days per year

Providing Additional Sick Leave is a key benefit that can be offered to support our employees. It is another tool to help recruit and retain top talent in a competitive environment by incentivizing employees to work for Wake County rather than our competitors. Four of our local government competitors, City of Raleigh, Town of Wake Forest, Town of Apex, and Town of Cary, offer Additional Sick Leave to their employees.

Staff recommends the establishment of Additional Sick Leave, effective December 1, 2023, which grants up to 60 days of Additional Sick Leave to benefit eligible employees in their 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> year of service with Wake County. Additional Sick Leave for benefits-eligible part-time employees will be prorated based on the budgeted FTE of the position.

<b>Additional Sick Leave</b>	
<b>Years of Service</b>	<b>Annual Contribution</b>
5	60 days
10	60 days
15	60 days
20	60 days
<b>Total</b>	<b>240 days</b>

Additional Sick Leave accrual will begin upon attaining each year of service milestone and is earned per pay period for the following 12 consecutive months, as long as the employee remains in the same FTE ratio position and in an active pay status. Employees currently in a milestone year of service as of December 1, 2023 will earn the full Additional Sick Leave amount for that year. Employees who have reached and completed milestone years of service prior to December 1, 2023 will not be granted Additional Sick Leave retroactively with the exception of employees who have completed 20 years of service or more. Employees with 20 years of service or more as of December 1, 2023 will accrue per pay period an accrual totalling 120 days over the subsequent 12 consecutive months. No employee shall accrue more than 240 days.

### **Use of Additional Sick Leave**

Additional Sick Leave may be used in the same manner as regular sick leave. Any unused balance is not paid out upon separation of employment. However, upon retirement from Wake County, unused Additional Sick Leave will count toward years of service for pension calculations according to North Carolina Local Governmental Employees Retirement System rules.

**Attachments:**

1. Presentation
2. November 13 Worksession Presentation
3. Revised Ordinance: Section 31.08