

# Employee and Family Assistance Program

Original Implementation Date:	2000	Approved by:	
Date of Last Revision:	May 19, 2021	Approved by:	Jacques Dubé, CAO
Effective Date of Last Revision:	August 12, 2021	Approved by:	Jacques Dubé, CAO

## 1 – Policy Name

Employee and Family Assistance Program

## 2 – Purpose

The Halifax Regional Municipality is committed to promoting and maintaining the well-being of its employees. Many situations can affect employee relationships, health and in some cases work performance. The Municipality believes that it is important to offer assistance to employees facing these situations and to encourage them to seek help voluntarily at the earliest stage to minimize any adverse effects on their work and personal life.

## 3 – Objectives

The objective of the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is to offer professional assistance that is confidential, neutral and voluntary to employees and their family members to assist them in dealing with personal and/or work-related issues.

## 4 – Scope

This Policy applies to all full-time and part-time permanent employees of Halifax Regional Municipality and their immediate families, with the exception of employees who are members of Halifax Regional Police Association (HRPA) and the International Association of Firefighters (IAFF 268). These employees and their families access business unit specific internal Family Assistance Programs. Terminated employees are eligible to access the EFAP for a period of 30 days from date of termination.

## 5 – Definitions

In the context of this document:

**Immediate family member** means spouse including common law spouse; dependent children under 21 years old living in the same household or children up to 25 years old and still in school.

## 6 – Roles and Responsibilities

### Directors, Managers and Supervisors

Directors, Managers and Supervisors are responsible for:

- Making employees aware of the EFAP in instances where declining job performance has been determined, if appropriate.
- Making arrangements for trauma support following any critical or traumatic incident (i.e. workplace accident, death of an employee, etc.).
- Maintaining a strict level of confidentiality when dealing with employees seeking assistance through the EFAP.

### Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- Being aware of and using the Employee and Family Assistance Program where comfortable and appropriate.

### Human Resources, Workplace Health Services

Human Resources, Workplace Health Services is responsible for:

- Coordinating the administration and operation of the Employee and Family Assistance Program.
- Providing brochures and details on the programs and services available through Workplace Health Services.

## 7 – Policy Regulations

- A. Delivery of these services is provided through a reputable external firm specializing in the provision of EFAP programs.
- B. The EFAP is provided at no cost to eligible employees and immediate family members.  
Exceptions:
  1. Should an EFAP counsellor recommend a referral to long-term specialized care, any costs associated with these private services that are not covered by employee health benefits or provincial health insurance are the responsibility of the employee. *It is the employee's choice whether or not to accept the referral.*
  2. Should an employee choose to access counselling through any service provider not associated with Halifax Regional Municipality's service provider, any costs associated with that provider will be the responsibility of the employee. Employee health benefits may cover some of these costs.
- C. Early intervention is desirable in dealing with any personal or family problems.
- D. Employees are encouraged to seek assistance voluntarily (self-referral) for personal

problems. The EFAP is strictly voluntary; mandatory referral is not used.

- E. Participation in the EFAP will not jeopardize an employee's job nor prejudice any opportunity for promotion or advancement.
- F. Participation in the EFAP is not an alternative to discipline nor is it to be used by management as a disciplinary measure.
- G. Confidentiality is the cornerstone of the EFAP. Information is not released to anyone without the employee's written consent. The employer will never know that an employee has accessed the program unless the employee chooses to disclose that information. The employer receives no records of individual employee usage of the program. Utilization trend reports are issued on a quarterly basis which contain no identifying information.
- H. Appointments can be arranged to suit individual schedules and can be scheduled outside of work hours during the week and on weekends.
- I. The Employee and Family Assistance program is not designed to assist in conflict resolution between employees and/or managers. These matters should be resolved through established administrative procedures and/or collective agreements. The EFAP can help the individual employee deal with personal consequences of conflicts that may be work-related.

## **8 – Repeal**

N/A

## **9 – Effective Date**

August 12, 2021

## **10 – Related Policies and Practices**

N/A

## **11 – Policy Review**

Review every 2 years.

## **12 – Contact**

EFAP Provider – Homewood Health:

Website: <https://homeweb.ca/>

Telephone: 1-800-663-1142.

Human Resources, Health and Wellness [hswh@halifax.ca](mailto:hswh@halifax.ca) or 902-490-6541.

Intranet page: <http://intranet.halifax.ca/BusinessUnits/HumanResources/HealthWellness.html>

### **13 – Attachments**

N/A