



## UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Washington, DC 20415

The Director

Friday, April 19, 2002

### **MEMORANDUM FOR: Heads Of Executive Departments And Agencies**

FROM: Kay Coles James, Director

Subject: National Volunteer Week

April 21-27, 2002, has been designated as the week to celebrate America's proud tradition of performing volunteer service in our communities. Federal employees have a rewarding history of generously giving of their time and talents to make positive contributions to their communities.

Earlier this year, President Bush established the USA Freedom Corps to encourage service and volunteerism in America. I ask that you support both the USA Freedom Corps and National Volunteer Week by ensuring that Federal employees are aware of the various work scheduling and leave flexibilities available to enable them to participate in volunteer activities.

The Federal personnel system provides agencies with considerable flexibility in scheduling hours of work and leave or other time off from work. Agencies are encouraged to make appropriate use of these flexibilities to permit employees to engage in volunteer activities, while giving due consideration to the effect of the employee's absence or change in duty schedule on work operations and productivity.

#### **Alternative Work Schedules**

- Agencies may establish alternative work schedules (i.e., flexible or compressed work schedules) for employees who wish to engage in volunteer activities during normal working hours. In addition, employees under flexible work schedules may use earned credit hours to fulfill their basic work requirement, thereby gaining time off from work to pursue volunteer activities and for other purposes. Additional information on flexible and compressed work schedules is available on OPM's Web site at [opm.gov/oca/worksch/index.htm](http://opm.gov/oca/worksch/index.htm).

## Leave and Other Time Off from Work

- Employees may request annual leave, leave without pay, or earned compensatory time off to perform volunteer service during normal working hours. Additional information on work schedules and Federal leave policies is available on OPM's Web site at [opm.gov/oca/index.htm](http://opm.gov/oca/index.htm).
- In very limited circumstances, agencies may grant employees excused absence (administrative leave) to participate in volunteer activities. Each department or agency has discretion to excuse employees from duty without loss of pay or charge to leave in those situations in which the employee's absence, in the department's or agency's determination, is not specifically prohibited by law and satisfies one or more of the following criteria: (1) the absence is directly related to the department or agency's mission; (2) the absence is officially sponsored or sanctioned by the head of the department or agency; (3) the absence will clearly enhance the professional development or skills of the employee in his or her current position; or (4) the absence is brief and is determined to be in the interest of the agency. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of each department or agency head to balance support for employees' volunteer activities with the need to ensure that employees' work requirements are fulfilled and that agency operations are conducted efficiently and effectively.

By their direct involvement in community activities, Federal employees have become an invaluable resource to our citizens. I encourage you to do everything in your power to ensure that this tradition of service continues.

If you have any questions about Federal pay and leave policies, please contact our Pay and Leave Administration Division on (202) 606-2858 or send an email message to [payleave@opm.gov](mailto:payleave@opm.gov).