

HR CONNECTION

Serving Employees of the Board of Commissioners

August 11, 2016

Policy Corner

Tuition Reimbursement

Delaware County will reimburse an employee up to 90% for the actual course tuition and required lab fee costs and 50% of the required book costs, not to exceed \$2,500 in total reimbursable expenses annually, during the County's budget cycle (review Section 4.0 for specific items). The employee shall provide proof of payment in full before reimbursement will be processed.



A. Reimbursement Eligibility Requirements:

Courses must correspond or be applicable to the employee's current position or department within the county and must directly benefit the county. (For example: coursework in nursing would not be reimbursed because the County does not have a nursing department or similar position).

1. Employee eligibility is based on the job-related performance of the employee, which must be in good standing prior to and throughout the period for which the tuition assistance was approved. The employee should not have had any written warnings, suspensions or other disciplinary action filed, nor be subject to a performance improvement plan within one year of applying for tuition assistance. No employee on a paid or an unpaid leave of absence, unauthorized leave of absence, disability leave, workers' compensation leave, or injury leave may apply for tuition assistance.
2. The employee must have one (1) or more years of continuous full time (forty hours per week) active service with Delaware County prior to applying for tuition assistance.
3. The applicant's supervisor must provide a statement of justification explaining why it would be currently beneficial to the County to provide tuition assistance to the applicant.
4. It is the responsibility of the employee to obtain approval for tuition assistance from his/her supervisor/manager, the Department of Human Resources and his or her Appointing Authority at least thirty (30) days prior to the start of the course(s) for each academic term.
5. The employee must receive a grade of "B" or equivalent, or better to receive tuition assistance for each course that tuition assistance is requested.
6. The college or university must be an accredited institution as defined in Section 4.0.
7. If an employee is eligible to receive or is receiving financial assistance from any governmental (federal, state or local entity) or private agency for the academic term, whether or not applied for and regardless of when such assistance may be received, that amount shall be deducted from the County's tuition assistance allowance.

Read the complete policy at <http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/hrdocuments/policies/tuition.pdf>

Read all policies at <http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/index.php/policies>

Questions? Contact HR at 740/833-2120.

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Visit us on the web at <http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/index.php/human-resources>

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LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The Golden Rule

The Baltimore Workplace Civility Study revealed that 36% of respondents had occasionally or frequently been a victim of uncivil workplace behaviour over the period of one year while 65% witnessed uncivil behaviour and 11% admitted to exhibiting uncivil behaviour.

84% of respondents felt that efforts to improve workplace civility would increase their personal productivity.

Research by CEB's Quarterly Global Labor Market found that respect ranked third among the things employees look for when seeking a new job (following stability and compensation).

The remainder of the program will focus on the positive things we can do to create and maintain a respectful workplace.

Examples of disrespect range from inoffensive but annoying to verging on dishonest or illegal.

- Neglecting to say "please" and "thank you"
- Taking someone's food from the office fridge
- Blaming someone else for your mistake
- Refusing to contribute to a team project
- Not cleaning up after yourself
- Leaving someone out of the loop
- Gossiping and spreading rumors
- Belittling others' opinion

Respect for Others Starts with Self-Respect

Self-respect has a direct effect on how we treat other people. For example, if we feel unappreciated and undervalued, we are likely to show a lack of appreciation for others.

Self-Respect Requires a Mastery of Emotions

The ability to treat yourself and others with respect depends on your ability to monitor and manage your emotions.



Activity: Review Your Emotions

Think of a recent situation when you experienced negative emotions. Go through the steps to identify what you were feeling, your explanation (self-talk), whether or not it was reasonable, how you responded, and if that response reflected mastery over your emotions or if another response would have been more effective.

- Scenario 1: A co-worker barges into your workspace and launches into a tirade about how you're not carrying your share of the workload for the team. You immediately feel defensive. How would you respond to them respectfully?
- Scenario 2: You and a co-worker are in a meeting. You suggest a new idea, they sigh heavily and roll their eyes. How do you respond to them respectfully?

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Individual Behaviors that Foster Respect = Common Courtesy and Good Manners

- ☞ Greet colleagues by name.
- ☞ Say “please” and “thank you”—always and to everyone.
- ☞ Use clean language.
- ☞ Don’t interrupt others.
- ☞ Hold the door open for others.
- ☞ Clean up after yourself—especially in common work or break areas.
- ☞ Arrive for meetings on time.

Building-Up Behaviors

- ☑ **Be a bridge builder.** Go out of your way to include others—in conversations, at lunch, on team projects, etc. Think about how your actions will be perceived if you exclude them.
- ☑ **Think before you speak!** Develop an awareness of how your words and body language will be received by the other person. Stop and say nothing if you are on the verge of blurting, gossiping, yelling, or engaging in some other disrespectful behavior.
- ☑ **Show empathy.** Put yourself in the other person’s place and figure out what they need in this situation—e.g., what they need to hear or don’t need to hear.
- ☑ **Be a good listener.** Maintain eye contact and use non-verbal language (such as nodding) to show you are listening, give the other person your full attention (put away your phone or tablet), and don’t interrupt but do reflect on what the other person said.
- ☑ **Make it a point to compliment others—especially in front of another person.** Compliments should be specific and sincere to be effective.
- ☑ **Respect other people’s opinions and beliefs.**
- ☑ **Seek to understand the reasons for their opinions.** Ask questions to gain insights about their views and beliefs.
- ☑ **Don’t tell the other person they are wrong.** If you believe they have said something factually incorrect, you can say, “My information is different.” But if they are expressing an opinion, you can simply acknowledge you don’t share the same perspective.
- ☑ **Don’t talk about them** behind their backs or make fun of their beliefs.

General Guidelines for Respectful Interactions

The best way to understand someone’s culture or what they see as acceptable behavior is to get to know them. But, until you get to know them, follow these general guidelines:

- ☞ Err on the side of being too formal rather than being too informal—it’s always the safest.
- ☞ Use last names and titles unless specifically told otherwise.
- ☞ Acknowledge status differences, i.e., show special attention to the highest-level businessperson present.
- ☞ Be punctual and understanding of others who are not punctual.
- ☞ Dress appropriately; others will appreciate your effort.
- ☞ Do not crowd or touch others.
- ☞ Mirror the amount of eye contact another person makes with you.
- ☞ Don’t impose your values on others; let them know you are interested to know what makes them comfortable. Don’t insist on doing things your way.

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THE OHIO ETHICS COMMISSION

The Ethics Law and the Private Sector

Gifts

Sending gifts to clients is often a normal course of conducting business in the private sector. When working with government offices, however, the private sector must be aware that the Ethics Law limits gift-giving to public officials and employees. This is one of the statutory provisions to which private sector parties can be subject. Ohio Revised Code 102.03(F) prohibits "improper" sources from promising or giving "substantial" things of value to public officials or employees.



- An "improper" source is any person or party who:
 - Is doing business with a public agency
 - Is seeking to do business with a public agency
 - Is regulated by a public agency
 - Has a specific interest in matters before a public agency
- "Substantial" (prohibited) things of value may include:
 - Expensive restaurant meals
 - Entertainment activities (e.g. golf outings, professional sports tickets)
 - Jewelry
- Travel, meals, and lodging expenses
- If public officials or employees are invited to substantial events (such as a golf outing), a method to allow them to pay their fair share of the event should be provided
- Small or minimal gifts (e.g. a coffee mug or an inexpensive meal at a family restaurant) are not considered "substantial" but should not be provided to public officials or employees on multiple occasions since adding the value together over time can be substantial
- Private sector parties may voluntarily donate items or services to public agencies, provided no official or employee personally benefits
- Be aware that individual government agencies may have policies that are even more stringent than the Ethics Law
- Thank you notes (especially if copied to agency supervisor or director) are preferable to gifts!
- See the information sheet for additional information on gifts <http://www.ethics.ohio.gov/education/factsheets/InfoSheet7-Gifts.pdf>

Supplemental Compensation

Supplemental Compensation is the other statutory provision under which the private sector can be directly regulated. This restriction ensures that public officials and employees owe allegiance only to the government agency he or she serves.

Private sector parties cannot give anything of value to a public official or employee with the intent to compensate him or her for performing a public job.

Such compensation could include:

- Money
- Gifts
- Travel expenses
- Both private and public sector parties guilty of violating the Supplemental Compensation can be charged with a first-degree misdemeanor
- Additionally, public employees and officials found guilty of soliciting or accepting Supplemental Compensation are prohibited from holding any public job or position for seven years

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How a Summer Wedding Can Affect Your Taxes

With all the planning and preparation that goes into a wedding, taxes may not be high on your summer wedding checklist. However, you should be aware of the tax issues that come along with marriage. Here are some basic tips to help with your planning:

- ☑ **Name change.** The names and Social Security numbers on your tax return must match your Social Security Administration records. If you change your name, report it to the SSA. To do that, file Form SS-5, Application for a Social Security Card. You can get the form on SSA.gov, by calling 800-772-1213 or from your local SSA office.
- ☑ **Change tax withholding.** A change in your marital status means you must give your employer a new [Form W-4](#), Employee's Withholding Allowance Certificate. If you and your spouse both work, your combined incomes may move you into a higher tax bracket or you may be affected by the [Additional Medicare Tax](#). Use the [IRS Withholding Calculator](#) tool at IRS.gov to help you complete a new Form W-4. See [Publication 505](#), Tax Withholding and Estimated Tax, for more information.
- ☑ **Changes in circumstances.** If you or your spouse purchased a Health Insurance Marketplace plan and receive advance payments of the [premium tax credit](#) in 2016, it is important that you [report changes in circumstances](#), such as changes in your income or family size, to your Health Insurance Marketplace when they happen. You should also notify the Marketplace when you move out of the area covered by your current Marketplace plan. Advance credit payments are paid directly to your insurance company on your behalf to lower the out-of-pocket cost you pay for your health insurance premiums. Reporting changes now will help you get the proper type and amount of financial assistance so you can avoid getting too much or too little in advance, which may affect your refund or balance due when you file your tax return.
- ☑ **Address change.** Let the IRS know if your address changes. To do that, send the IRS [Form 8822](#), Change of Address. You should also notify the U.S. Postal Service. You can ask them online at USPS.com to forward your mail. You may also report the change at your local post office. You should also notify your Health Insurance Marketplace when you move out of the area covered by your current health care plan.
- ☑ **Tax filing status.** If you're married as of Dec. 31, that's your marital status for the whole year for tax purposes. You and your spouse can choose to file your federal income tax return either jointly or separately each year. You may want to figure the tax both ways to find out which status results in the lowest tax.
- ☑ **Select the right tax form.** Choosing the right income tax form can help save money. Newly married taxpayers may find that they now have enough deductions to itemize on their tax returns. You must claim itemized deductions on a [Form 1040](#), not a Form 1040A or Form 1040EZ.

Source: IRS.gov



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Becoming a Volunteer

Deciding to become a volunteer is the first step toward an experience that is sure to offer you as many benefits as you are offering to those you help. Get ready for new relationships, self-fulfillment, skill-building opportunities and more, all from the simple act of volunteering.

To get the most out of volunteering, the best position will challenge you, utilize your strengths, fit your time restraints and be of interest to you. This offers the organization with which you volunteer your strengths, while you get to further your interests: a win-win situation. Use the following information to discover why volunteering is so beneficial and to find the right volunteer opportunity for you.

The Hidden Benefits of Volunteering

If the simple act of helping others is not a selling point for becoming a volunteer, consider the many benefits volunteers experience: feelings of self-fulfillment, numerous growth opportunities, increased social awareness, an expanded social circle, newfound self-confidence, better health and the discovery of hidden talents and strengths.

Additionally, being a volunteer enhances professional opportunities. You will develop and enhance skills, gain new experience and increase your networking contacts. It also is a great way for students to get professional work experience while building a résumé.

Four Questions to Ask Yourself

Once you have decided that you are interested in becoming a volunteer, take some time to choose an organization or project that best fits your needs. Ask yourself:

1. What do you enjoy doing? By extending a hobby or interest into a volunteer position, you will be able to participate in an activity you understand and enjoy, helping others along the way. For almost every activity you can imagine, there is a need for a volunteer.
2. How often do you want to volunteer? Any amount of volunteering is helpful, but certain volunteer activities will require a longer period of commitment. If you only have a few days a year available, do not volunteer for an ongoing project that requires weekly input. Be honest with the amount of time to which you can commit; others will be relying on you to fulfill your role.
3. How do you work best? Some people excel as part of a team; others do their best work on their own. Some people prefer to lead a group, while others would rather receive instructions. Pick the scenario you enjoy and in which you work best.
4. What do you want out of it? People volunteer for different reasons: to help those in need; to fill a belief or purpose; to bring themselves joy and peace. By deciding what is your purpose in volunteering, you can better decide what type of position and organization will fit your needs and wants.

Finding Volunteer Opportunities

There are so many volunteer positions available that a new search may be overwhelming. A simple way to begin your search is to start big (think national or international), working your way down to local opportunities.

- Look up websites for federal volunteer programs, or call the headquarters of national and international non-profit organizations.
- Contact your state or city government office for a list of regional volunteer programs.
- Read the newspaper. Corporate-sponsored events such as charity walks and runs usually are advertised in local papers, and the events section also may offer names of charities or non-profits that are throwing events.
- Check with your local colleges and school systems. Typically there is a board for flyers indicating volunteer positions that need to be filled, both on- and off-campus.
- Ask at your place of worship. Many religious affiliations associate themselves with charitable causes.
- Ask your neighbors, friends and co-workers. People are likely to know of others who volunteer their time somewhere.
- Go to a local store that specializes in your interests. Your hardware store may know of low-income housing that needs to be built; your bookstore may run a literacy program; your grocer can point you to a Meals-On-Wheels contact. Opportunities to help others are everywhere; you just need to ask.

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Getting Others Involved

Volunteering as part of a group can be very beneficial: it helps build team awareness; it can make the first few steps in becoming a volunteer less daunting than if on one's own; it can help build social skills; and it offers support from others to continue. If you want to encourage others to volunteer with you, try these suggestions:

- Talk with your human-resources manager about a company-wide volunteer project. This could be a Saturday spent painting houses, helping out at a kitchen pantry or answering phones for a local charity drive.
- Sign up your family. Volunteering as a family unit can be educational, fun and help build stronger family bonds.
- Get the neighborhood together. Helping out a local charity is fun and productive when everyone pitches in. A group garage sale, sponsoring a needy family or gathering food to help feed those less fortunate are all ways to offer a neighborhood's services.

A Different Type of Volunteer

When people think of volunteering, they may think only of feeding the homeless. However, there are so many different types of volunteer opportunities out there today that most everyone can find an interesting, challenging way to volunteer their skills. Some inventive volunteer positions include the following examples:

- Virtual volunteering. This is a convenient way to offer your time and abilities, especially for those with limited transportation options. Virtual volunteers should have reliable Internet access, solid written communication skills, a self-motivated personality and be capable of making and keeping project deadlines.
- Volunteer vacations. Want to combine a love of adventure and travel with helping others? Try a volunteer vacation, in which you help others while traveling to another location. High-school and college students often participate in volunteer trips during spring break.
- Charity bike rides and walks. These are great ways to meet new people, get some exercise, have fun and generate funds for a variety of causes.
- Docents. These volunteer tour-leaders guide individuals and groups through museums, zoos and other attractions. Training is provided in most cases.
- Building and construction. You do not have to be an on-site construction worker to help build houses for the homeless, erect playgrounds for children in low-income neighborhoods or restore senior community centers.

Resources

Serve.gov: www.serve.gov

Volunteer.gov: www.volunteer.gov

VolunteerMatch: www.volunteermatch.org

Do Something: www.dosomething.org

Global Volunteer Network: www.globalvolunteernetwork.org

American Red Cross: www.redcross.org

Peace Corps: www.peacecorps.gov

U.S. Forest Service: www.fs.fed.us

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Wellness

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Visit us online:

[www.co.delaware.oh.us
/index.php/wellness](http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/index.php/wellness)

Annual Delaware County Employee Softball Tournament



Delaware County, in coordination with our Wellness Program, would like to invite you to participate in the 3rd Annual Delaware County Employee Softball Tournament. Employees only are eligible to participate, but all family members are welcome to come cheer us on!!

We are asking that one person from each department be designated to coordinate the sign up to participate. That coordinator will be responsible for submitting all names, via email to Delco-Wellness@co.delaware.oh.us, by the **August 17 deadline**. Please discuss within your department and submit all names at the same time. **TEAMS MUST HAVE AN EQUAL NUMBER OF MALE AND FEMALE PLAYERS!!**

You do NOT need to have enough players for a team; you may recruit from any department within the County. We will combine players to make a team if you do not have enough people signed up. Once we have a complete list of participants we will begin putting teams together and distributing additional paperwork that will need completed to each coordinator. Game times will be available once the teams have been submitted and the brackets created.

Various departments have participated and a few rivalries have been created in the past couple of years. We're looking forward to seeing that continue this year.

We are very excited to offer an employee based - FUN - outing such as this!

Please consider participating and be sure not to miss the August 17th deadline for sign up.

**August 27, 2016
Concord Township Park
6385 Home Rd.
Delaware, OH 43015**

Bracket TBD based on number of teams

\$5.00 per Person to participate

We will do our best to create teams based on departments

Winners Receive: Bragging Rights and a Winning Team Plaque

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/index.php/wellness](http://www.co.delaware.oh.us/index.php/wellness)

August is National Immunization Awareness Month

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has declared August to be National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) with the hopes of educating people about the benefits of immunizations.

Although babies are born with a certain level of immunity to many diseases, this immunity does not last very long. Immunizing your child helps to protect him or her from contracting and spreading certain diseases. Many of these diseases can be life-threatening; a simple injection or oral medication can virtually eliminate your child's risk of developing these diseases.

Although there are some risks associated with immunizations, the benefits to your children and your children's children far outweigh the risks. Immunization not only helps to keep your children healthy, it helps to control the spread of some contagious diseases, ensuring the safety of future generations. Talk to your child's pediatrician about any concerns that you have about immunizations.

Many vaccines can be given during a single doctor's visit, and multiple vaccines can be given in a single injection. The CDC recommends the following childhood immunizations:

- Hepatitis B (HepB): This vaccination protects against Hepatitis B, a highly contagious virus that can lead to diseases of the liver. The vaccine is given in a series of three doses.
- Diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTaP): This vaccination protects against diphtheria, lock-jaw and whooping cough. The vaccine is given in a series of five doses, all of which should be administered before your child enrolls in grade school. Boosters should be given every 10 years for children and adults.
- Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib): This vaccination protects against one strain of bacteria responsible for meningitis. The vaccine is given in a series of three doses and a booster.
- Measles, mumps and rubella (MMR): This vaccination protects against measles, mumps and German measles. The vaccine is given in a series of two doses, both of which should be administered before your child enrolls in grade school.
- Varicella: This vaccination protects against chickenpox. The vaccine is given in one dose to children and in two doses to older children and adults who have not had chickenpox.
- Pneumococcal conjugate (PCV): This vaccination protects against the bacteria responsible for pneumonia, blood infections and bacterial meningitis. The vaccine is given in a series of four doses.

Inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV): This vaccination protects against polio. The vaccine is given in a series of four doses, all of which should be administered before your child enrolls in grade school. Your child's school or pediatrician, depending on the needs of your situation, may recommend other vaccines. Make sure you consult with your child's doctor for more information and to develop an immunization schedule that meets your needs.

Resources

American Academy of Pediatrics: www.aap.org
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov
National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine: www.nccam.nih.gov

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Safety and Risk Management

The Safety and Risk Management Office, part of the Human Resources Department, ensures that all County employees are provided a safe and healthful work environment as stated in the Public Employment Risk Reduction Program Act (PERRP).

Brad Euans, Workers Compensation/FMLA/HR Coordinator

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September is National Food Safety Month

Kitchen Safety

Of all things we must do everyday, eating is one that has many observable effects on how we look and feel. Whether whipping up a midnight snack, packing a child's school lunch or hosting a dinner party, most of us do not give much thought to the safety of the foods we eat. Nature has provided us with natural signs that foods are unsafe to eat, but significant risks still exist, even when foods appear safe. When foods go bad, they look funny, feel questionable or downright stink. Making an exception for gastro-intestinal ailments like acid reflux, more than half of the upset stomachs, "stomach flu" or diarrhea we all experience can be attributed to some sort of food poisoning, but typically are not considered an issue of home kitchen safety.

Although poor hygiene, substandard kitchen cleanliness and pest issues are considered the most obvious causes of food-related safety problems, simple lapses in storage and preparation techniques can undermine the best intentions of even the most diligent cooks. Special care should be taken when preparing food for those with weakened immune systems, including babies and small children, the elderly, pregnant women, people taking certain medications such as antibiotics and immunosuppressants or people who recently underwent major surgery, are organ-transplant recipients or have pre-existing or chronic illnesses.

Going Shopping

When choosing food for you and your family, common sense prevails. While many items are naturally resistant to spoilage, some are helped by packaging methods and approved preservatives. Always carefully inspect everything you put in your cart. Here are some tips to make sure that your groceries make it home safely:

- Avoid dented or rusty cans, which indicate the possibility that a sealed can has been compromised.
- Bulging cans, especially beans, can be a sign of microorganism growth, including botulism, which is highly toxic and sometimes fatal.
- Packaging for dry goods such as flour, cereals, etc. should show no signs of holes, tears or water damage.
- Meat, poultry and fish should have no off odors. If these items are packaged on Styrofoam trays and wrapped with plastic, poke a hole just big enough to smell the contents. Packages that are vacuum-sealed or shrink-wrapped are specially processed and/or preserved and typically need not be treated with suspicion.
- Refreezing food will not make it safe by killing any hazardous microorganisms. This only temporarily suspends the growth of dangerous bacteria.
- Red meat should be bright red and firm, not mushy. Any fat should be white.
- Chicken should be firm to the touch and the fat should be more white than yellow. Keep in mind that one well-known, nationally distributed chicken processor includes marigold petals in the chickens' diet in order to give the skin a deep yellowish color.
- Fish should not be mushy and should not smell too "fishy." If you are buying fish frozen, excessive ice crystals inside the plastic can indicate that the fish was frozen, thawed and then refrozen, making it potentially unsafe.
- When buying dairy products, pay attention to expiration dates. Dairy items are safe to eat for about a week after this date, which assumes the items have been properly stored and will be properly refrigerated.

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Storing Food

After your trip to the market, it is very important to store foods so that they stay safe and do not spoil before you have had a chance to use them. While the refrigerator has revolutionized cooking and eating in the twentieth century, caution and common sense must be exercised when storing foods in such a confined space. Most of us know that keeping foods covered and placing an open box of baking soda in the fridge will help reduce odors, but just because something does not smell it does not mean it is completely safe to eat.

Raw meats, chicken and fish should only remain in the fridge for a maximum of about two days. If you do not use them in that time, throw them away. Refreezing meat, chicken or fish will not make them safe for future use. If you know that time is running out on a raw chicken breast, fish fillet or steak, cook it thoroughly, wrap it tightly and put it back in the fridge. Cooking will keep the food safe for an additional three days.

Because they may drip, do not store raw meats directly above foods that are "ready to eat," meaning that they can be eaten directly out of the fridge with no cooking. This may not always be possible, as fruits and vegetables that may be eaten raw are often stored in drawers at the very bottom of the refrigerator. To avoid any problems, make sure that raw meats are carefully wrapped and placed on plates or in containers that will prevent liquid from dripping on items below.

Here are more rules of thumb for proper food storage:

- Always discard any food on which mold has begun to grow. Cutting the moldy parts off cheese or bread may not make the remaining piece safe to eat.
- Try to keep dry goods like oatmeal, flour, rice and dried legumes (beans, lentils, etc.) in airtight containers and away from moisture and sunlight.

If you are going to buy frozen meat, chicken or fish in bulk to save money, buy them fresh, divide into smaller portions and then freeze. Never thaw a food, divide it and then refreeze it.

Safe Cooking

Whether you are using the stove, the oven or the microwave, you will want to be sure to heat potentially hazardous food sufficiently. When working in the kitchen, pay particular attention when preparing meals so that all ready-to-eat foods do not come in contact, directly or indirectly, with raw meat, chicken or fish. This "cross-contamination" occurs when anything potentially unsafe touches something that will be eaten without further cooking.

Remember to wash your hands often with an antibacterial soap after handling raw meat, chicken or fish. Never use the same cutting board on which you have sliced raw chicken to slice vegetables that will be eaten with little or no cooking without thoroughly cleaning the board first. Very hot, soapy water should be used while scrubbing cutting boards, containers, knives and other utensils, and any part of the countertop that may have had contact with raw meat, chicken or fish. A dilute solution of household chlorine bleach (2 oz. per gallon of water) kept in a marked spray bottle is a handy way to make sure that cutting boards, counter tops and refrigerator shelves are safe after coming in contact with raw foods. To achieve the full effect, let the solution sit on surfaces for at least one minute before wiping or rinsing. Since combining bleach and soapy detergents will compromise the effectiveness of your sanitizing solution, use them separately.

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HR CONNECTION

Serving Employees of the Board of Commissioners

August 11, 2016

Safety and Risk Management

The Safety and Risk Management Office, part of the Human Resources Department, ensures that all County employees are provided a safe and healthful work environment as stated in the Public Employment Risk Reduction Program Act (PERRP).

Brad Euans, Workers Compensation/FMLA/HR Coordinator

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When cooking or reheating, keep in mind the following guidelines:

- Allow your oven to preheat completely before cooking meats, chicken or fish that must be cooked all the way through.
- Ground beef is potentially more dangerous than steak, so while leaving a steak pink in the middle may be safe, you should not make hamburger patties too thick or leave them overly pink inside. Some restaurants will even ask diners to sign a waiver when ordering rare hamburgers.
- When cooked, chicken should never be observably pink in the middle.
- When completely cooked, juices coming from roasts, large pieces of fish and whole chickens or turkeys should be clear.
- Microwaves heat very unevenly, even those with rotating bases. Be sure to periodically stir or turn foods in the microwave to prevent hot and cold spots.

When thawing frozen meat, chicken or fish, never thaw in standing water. Acceptable safe methods for thawing include leaving an item in the refrigerator, using the microwave or leaving the frozen food under running water that is allowed to drain continually.

Leftovers

Cooked foods typically last longer than raw ones, but be careful when storing cooked leftovers. Try these methods:

- Tightly wrap and label all leftovers.
- Large batches of foods like soup and chili should be divided for quick cooling and also so that some can go into the refrigerator and some immediately into the freezer.

Always cover everything to prevent spills and drips from contaminating other nearby items. This will also reduce strong odors from affecting other foods in the fridge.

There are few daily experiences as rewarding as a home-cooked meal. Sometimes, though, in the interest of efficiency, saving money or lack of time, we all cut corners in the kitchen that can put our families at risk for food-related illness. A few simple concepts and techniques can make sure that your kitchen is always a safe place.

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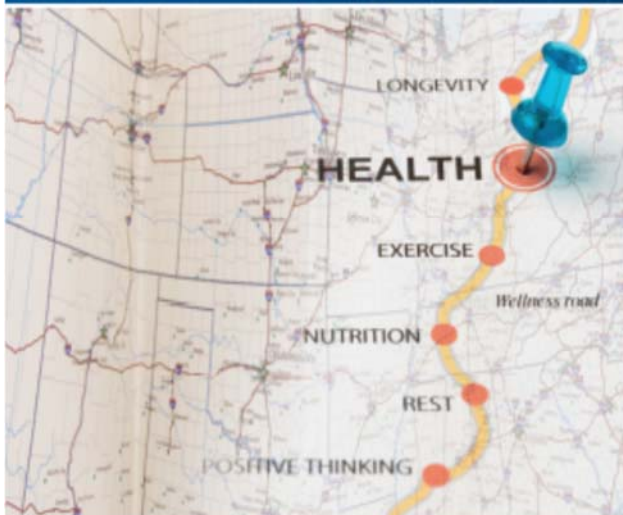
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HR CONNECTION

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Map out your retirement pension income and health care



Learn	Plan	Act
<p>Learn: Health care program changes may impact you. Know what you need to qualify for health care. OPERS provides retirement information online, in seminars and with publications—all available to members.</p>	<p>Plan: Make strategic choices. Use the OPERS-provided retirement planner (online), the health care calculator (online), access counseling and checklists before you make important retirement decisions.</p>	<p>Act: Decision made? Take action. Remember, some applications for pension benefits take longer than others and you'll need specific documents.</p>

Go online or call OPERS to LEARN what you need, PLAN to find your documents so that you can ACT on retirement when you know it's the right time for you.



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OPERS Tidbits

Education Team Seeks Member Input

Throughout your career you will be faced with a number of personal financial challenges and important retirement decisions. As your partner in this journey, OPERS wants to provide the information you need to make the best decisions for your future.

To learn more about how we can help, the OPERS Education team is partnering with public employers in Ohio. OPERS is inviting you to complete a member survey. This is your opportunity to tell OPERS how they can better serve you throughout your career.

What topics would you like OPERS to cover in seminars? Do you want to know more about personal finance or OPERS benefits? Your feedback will be used to tailor OPERS educational offerings to meet your needs.

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Q. My statement went to my old address even though I had given my new address to my employer. Why?

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Source: www.opers.org

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