



# Voluntary Time-Off (VTO) Program FAQ

## What is the Voluntary Time-Off (VTO) Program?

The [Voluntary Time Off \(VTO\)](#) Program helps employees balance their work with their personal or family demands by allowing them to reduce their working hours for the fiscal year without losing the County benefits afforded to a full-time employee. To participate in this program, you must be a permanent, limited term, provisional or temporary full-time employee. Your Supervisor and Department Head must also approve your request to participate in the VTO program.

## How do I sign up for the VTO program?

The employee needs to enroll/request by opening a VTO event through Workday. Please click [here](#) or refer to the [VTO Quick Reference Card](#) that can be downloaded on the [VTO webpage](#).

## When can I sign up for the VTO Program?

VTO applications are accepted year-round. However, employees wishing to get the maximum time off for the year must submit a VTO application to their Supervisor and Department Head by **June 1, 2023**. As a reminder, VTO requests must be made in advance.

If you wish to enroll in VTO **effective June 25, 2023**, all requests must be made **by June 1, 2023**. For all other dates, **you must select a date prior to the beginning of the next pay period and use this date as your Workday Event date**. Please review the VTO Hours Calculation Table on the [VTO webpage](#) for pay periods and hours available.

## How does the VTO Program work?

Under the VTO Program, you can choose to reduce your annual working hours within a fiscal year by either 1%, 2%, 3%, 4% 5%, 10%, 15% or 20%. (see VTO Hours Calculation Table on the [VTO webpage](#))

VTO Hours Calculation Table for Full Fiscal Year	
Percentage Reduction	Number of VTO Hours Available for Time-Off
1%	20.8
2%	41.6
3%	62.4
4%	83.2
5%	104
10%	208
15%	312
20%	416

If you submit a VTO application for 10% time-off effective pay period beginning **June 25, 2023** and your Supervisor and Department Head approved it and all steps were processed in Workday, you would receive 208 hours to use as time-off for the entire fiscal year (July through June). If you enrolled in VTO in the middle of the year, the amount of VTO hours available to you depends on the percentage of VTO you choose and the number of pay periods remaining in the fiscal year. (see VTO Hours Calculation Table on the [VTO webpage](#) .

**Questions?** Contact Employee Benefits: (650) 363-1919 or [benefits@smcgov.org](mailto:benefits@smcgov.org)



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You “pay” for the VTO time-off by a reduction in your paycheck for the remainder of the fiscal year. In other words, your hourly pay rate is reduced by the VTO percentage you choose. For example, if you choose to reduce your working hours by 10%, your bi-weekly gross pay will be reduced by 10% for the remainder of the fiscal year. This requires that you remain in a paid status for the remainder of the fiscal year to ensure that the hours of VTO you have been granted are paid back to the County.

All VTO hours are available for you to use as “time off” immediately upon enrollment in the VTO Program (e.g. if you apply for VTO by **June 1, 2023** and it is approved, your VTO time will be available to you starting the week of **June 25, 2023**— see next question for more information about using VTO in June). You can use the additional time off as a shorter workday (e.g. 7.5 hour work day), a shorter workweek (e.g. one day off per bi-weekly pay period), or a block time off (e.g. one week off during the year or help stay in a paid status during a leave of absence). Your schedule must be mutually agreed upon between you and your supervisor to ensure operational needs can still be met.

Although your VTO hours are available to you upon enrollment in the program, you are “reimbursing” the County for these hours through a reduction in your bi-weekly paycheck until the end of the fiscal year.

You may not be in an unpaid status at any time during your VTO contractual period or you will be required to reimburse the County for the pro-rated amount for the time you were not being paid.

### When can I start using VTO hours?

Please note that multiple steps for approval must occur in Workday after the VTO application is submitted. The final step requires a file to be sent to the Controller’s Office to load the VTO hours. For the initial VTO start date of **6/25/2023**, the compensation step would need to be finalized and approved by noon on **6/29/2023** for the hours to be loaded and available in ATKS by **6/30/2023**. **If you submit a VTO application by June 1, 2023 and all steps are approved and processed by June 16<sup>th</sup>, you can begin to use your VTO time-off the week of June 25, 2023.**

In Workday, all steps must be approved for VTO and the compensation must be approved/completed for the Controller’s Office to add hours (see below for deadlines for the initial open enrollment period).

- If compensation is approved by noon on 6/29/2023, the VTO Hours will be available to the employee on the 6/30/2023 in ATKS
- If compensation is approved by noon on 7/6/2023, the VTO Hours will be available to the employee on 7/7/2023 in ATKS
- If compensation is approved by noon on 7/13/2023, the VTO Hours will be available to the employee in 7/14/2023 in ATKS

If you apply for VTO at any other time of the fiscal year, multiple steps for approval will occur in Workday and hours will be loaded and available once all steps and compensation has been changed. Employees can view the status in Workday.

### Can I change my VTO % of time-off during the year?

No, you cannot change your % of time-off during the year.



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### **Can I cancel my participation in the VTO program during the year?**

No, you cannot withdraw from the VTO program unless you transfer to another department, promote to a higher classification that does not allow VTO, and/or terminate employment.

### **What happens if I am promoted, transferred to a new Division, terminated or if I resign from my current position?**

If one of the above situations happens and you have a balance of unused VTO hours that you have already “paid” for, the County would pay you an amount equal to the number of unused hours at your hourly pay rate. This is subject to review

If you used more VTO hours than you have “paid” for, the amount overpaid to you would be deducted from your paycheck, if available.

If you terminate employment, you would be responsible for reimbursing this overpayment to the County at the time of your departure, using your regular hourly rate of pay.

You should contact your payroll coordinator to help calculate any over or underpayment.

### **What happens if I don’t use all of the VTO hours before the end of the fiscal year?**

It is strongly encouraged that you use all VTO hours within the VTO calendar year as unused hours will not be carried over into the next fiscal year.

*In the event a balance remains, the unused portion of your time off acquired from this program will be computed and any necessary pay adjustments will be made using the hourly rate of pay including longevity pay adjustments.*

### **Can my Department Head reject my VTO application?**

Yes. Your Department Head has the discretion to approve or reject your VTO application.

### **Does my participation in the VTO Program impact my benefits?**

No, participating in the VTO Program has no effect on your health, dental, vision or life insurance coverage; years of service for purposes of retirement; step increases; probationary period; or seniority. In addition, there is no effect on the accrual of vacation, sick leave, holiday, and management administrative leave. However, time off taken for these benefits will be paid at the reduced VTO rate. VTO hours used are not considered as time worked when determining eligibility for overtime compensation.

VTO may impact the salary upon which your retirement benefit is calculated if VTO is taken in the last 12 or 36 months of your employment (depending on your Retirement Plan). VTO also impacts short and long-term disability benefits since these benefits would be based upon the reduced VTO rate. VTO hours are not eligible for the County’s integration of hours which happens as a result of receiving state disability payments.



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### What happens if I go on leave of absence during the time I am participating in the VTO program?

The number of VTO hours available is based upon the contractual agreement that you will pay for the used VTO hours by reducing your pay and paying these hours back each pay check for the remainder of the fiscal year. If you have used the VTO hours that were given to you and fall into an unpaid status during the time you are participating in the VTO Program, you will be billed to the hours you have not "paid" for. This is possible because, once the fiscal year starts, the total number of VTO hours you elected for the year are immediately available for your use even though you have not yet "paid" for them.

- If you go on leave of absence and you are using your vacation, holiday, compensatory or sick leave time during your leave, your paychecks you receive while on leave will simply reflect the reduced VTO hourly rate which include your longevity pay and any compensation pay adjustment during the fiscal year.
- If you go on unpaid leave of absence at any time while participating in the VTO Program, the number of unused VTO hours available to you will be re-calculated and reduced accordingly.
- If you go on unpaid leave of absence and exhaust all of your paid time off, you will be required to reimburse the County for any amount owed for the VTO hours you have used but not "paid" for.

### Who can I contact for more information about the VTO Program?

For more information about the [VTO](#) Program, visit <https://www.smcgov.org/hr/voluntary-time-vto> or contact Employee Benefits at (650) 363-1919 or email [benefits@smcgov.org](mailto:benefits@smcgov.org).