



# MAKING THE CASE FOR A CENTRALIZED LOA TEAM

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# Today's Speakers



**Jim Jantz, J.D.**

**Compliance Director**  
Marsh McLennan Agency  
Absence, Disability and Life

**12+ years of industry experience:**

Specializes in TAFW strategy, program design, and compliance.

**Compliance focus:** Attorney with a dedicated focus on ADL compliance and regulatory changes.

**Employer focus:** ADL subject-matter expertise with a background on the employer side.



**Mary Siegenthaler**

**Manager- Leave of Absence**  
Safelite

**15+ years experience:** Focus on benefits, payroll and leave and accommodation administration.

**Depth and breadth of expertise:** Direct experience with companies of all sizes, industries and unique needs

**Change Agent:** Driven several small and large-scale program changes to increase efficiency and employee experience.



**Jennifer Skeeters**

**Center of Excellence Leader**  
Marsh McLennan Agency  
Absence, Disability and Life

**10+ years industry experience:** Specializes in absence, disability, and life programs.

**Client relationship leader:** Manages account teams and strengthens client relationships across diverse industries.

**Best practices focus:** Expertise in process and change management based on employer needs.



# Leave Management Benchmarking

FMLA/Leave Administration

66%  
outsource

34%  
insource

ADAAA Administration

59%  
outsource

41%  
insource

## #1 Pain Point

The top pain point from all responses is improving the overall employee experience.



Data based on MMA 2025 Leave of Absence and Time Away from Work Survey, which includes 218 employers across 18 industries.

**DMEC COMPLIANCE  
2026 CONFERENCE**

# LOA/Accommodation Employer Responsibilities

Responsibilities of an employer regardless of administration model (insource/outsource/co-source)

- Policy creation
- Training
- Escalation handling
- Employee and manager communication
- Accommodations and ADA compliance
- FMLA compliance
- Accrued paid leave compliance

Employer LOA/accommodation management responsibilities require specialized skills and knowledge not typically held by HR Generalists.

Further, centralized LOA management ensures consistency and compliance in leave management that is not otherwise achievable if responsibilities are distributed among a generalist team.



# Lack of a Centralized LOA Team

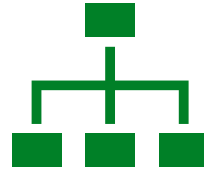
What are the consequences of not having a centralized LOA team?



## Lack of standardization

Whether in-house or outsourced, centralization can create consistency and standardization throughout the LOA process

- In-house: centralization leads to standardized administration process for all LOA requests
- Outsourced: standard response to escalations, consistent vendor management



## Lack of ownership

Centralization creates accountability and ownership



## Lack of coordination

LOA administration requires more than just the "LOA team" - many others are involved: HR, legal, IT, HRIS, payroll, and more!



# Centralized LOA Expertise

Regardless of in-house or outsourced, LOA needs a centralized SME (or SMEs) to train and engage stakeholders

## Downward Training: focused on LOA requirements/process

- In-house: Training of LOA case managers on compliance requirements, LOA administration
  - Training of other LOA roles (compliance, escalations, supervisors, etc.)
  - Training of other stakeholders (IT, HRIS, Payroll, etc.) to ensure their understanding of their role in the process;
  - Training of Managers/HR on how to recognize a request for LOA
- Outsourced: Training of all internal stakeholders (IT, HRIS, Payroll, etc.) and vendor manager (+ "training" of the vendor partner, whether TPA, insurer, etc.)

## Upward Training: info sharing on health of LOA program

- Big picture, helps leadership understand complexities which can help with projects/issues that go beyond case management
- Also includes:
  - Updating and maintaining job descriptions
  - LOA projects involving non-LOA stakeholders (e.g., IT or payroll)
  - Training of managers/HR on the LOA process, and recognizing LOA requests
  - Legal or compliance issues
  - Justifying costs of outsourcing (or costs of resources/headcount for in-house program)



# Internal LOA Team Best Practices

## Internal Partnerships

### Develop working relationships with internal streams

- Benefits – benefit premiums, qualifying events, duration of continuation
- Payroll – how are payments made?
- Legal – are we minimizing litigation risk?
- Human Resources Business Partners/Leaders – what role do they have?
- Communications – Is information available? Is it clear?

### Education and Insights on Leave and ADA

- A third-party administrator is not a true extension of HR
- A centralized team ensures all parties have a trusted resource for guidance on individual claims and policy administration
- Leave and disability data can provide strategic business insights
- A supportive business can help ensure a better, and potentially faster, return



# Internal LOA Team Best Practices

Culture and Experience

## What is the company culture?

- How involved should the company be?
- How big should the internal leave team be?
- How can other departments help in the leave process – such as a shared service team

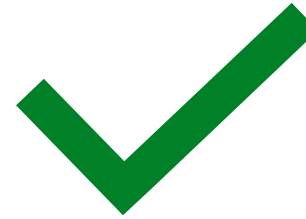
## Employee Experience

- Does the employee know who to contact internally if there are issues/escalations?
- Employee training – are there resources easily available for employees to understand the process?



# Internal LOA Team Best Practices

## Coordination and Accuracy



### Process flow alignment - all parties

Third party administrator - Have a clear understanding of process flows

Internal LOA Team – align internal processes to those of the TPA

- Ensure the teams are working together, not against each other
- When does the company continue the review?  
Example: Leave Denials

### Data Accuracy

HRIS data must be accurate in order to properly process claims

- Scheduled hours
- Pay rate
- Job title
- Employee type
- Work state



# Internal LOA Team Best Practices

## Assistance with Processes



### Employee Experience with the Interactive Process / Dialogue

Even with outsourcing, the business is responsible for the Interactive Process

Documentation is key – including the Business' interaction  
ADA is more than just Medical Documentation



### Be prepared to help administer some processes

TPAs may not assist with some processes (such as terminations or next step of leave denials)

TPAs may not be able to assist with benefits – such as premium payments, LTD transition, COBRA, etc.



### A strong, knowledgeable internal team is a protection for the business



# Questions?

