



Retail Business Services

Associate Spotlight: Meet the Leave of Absence Team

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Meet the Leave of Absence team: the people that work behind the scenes to support associates during some of life's most exciting, and sometimes challenging times.

Whether for parental leave, medical leave or bereavement, the LOA team plays a critical role in helping associates navigate the sometimes complex process of taking off work during a time of need. This year, they're on track to help more than 25,000 associates across all Ahold Delhaize USA companies.

"We use a 'high-touch model,' which simply means explaining coverage eligibility in a caring and respectful way," says Chris Washburn, Manager of the Leave of Absence program. "It's big, complicated work, and we're honored to provide it."

Here at RBS and the Ahold Delhaize USA companies, we pride ourselves in being one of the best places to work, and that means providing our associates with the support they need to show up as their best selves both within and outside of the workplace. "There really is no better feeling than an associate sharing how you made a challenging and scary time just a bit easier," said Rebecca Shaw, LOA Coordinator.

Based in Scarborough, Rebecca joined RBS in 2019 after 13 years as an Administrative Assistant in HR at the Distribution Center in South Portland, Maine, as well as the lead of the Recognition and Community Relations team. According to Rebecca, denying leave requests is the hardest part of the job. "Having that conversation with the associate can be heartbreaking. But we do our best to help them navigate the process and access all the benefits and resources available to them during their time away from work, including state benefits."

Linda Gregor, Senior Leave Coordinator for RBS, just celebrated a major milestone: 25 years with Ahold Delhaize USA companies. But a quarter century on the job hasn't dimmed her enthusiasm. "From the minute I arrive and sign into Teams, I receive pings from associates across the organization who have questions about leave and the LOA process. Sometimes, they're just saying hi," she said. For the last six years she's guided associates through the leave of absence process: "I call associates to check in with them and update their leave. Many times, before I can say hello, they will say, 'Hey, Linda, how are you!' I can only imagine how many phones have my number saved."



Chris Washburn
LOA Program Manager



Rebecca Shaw
LOA Coordinator



Linda Gregor
Senior LOA Coordinator

Associates Say Thank You to Leave Coordinators

Chances are, if an associate needs to take a leave of absence, it's because of a family or medical emergency. Understanding the process and completing paperwork for time off aren't easy tasks during highly stressful personal situations. But Leave Coordinators have the expertise – and compassion – to lend a hand, which is why some associates wanted to say thank you for the work they do to ease the process.

George, a Stop & Shop associate, simply wanted to share his appreciation for Kate Pelletier's help: "I know your job is often thankless, and associates don't always take the time to appreciate what you and your department do to help us. Thank you very much."

Michelle, an associate at The GIANT Company, says she was having difficulties with her claims process when Dan and Bekka from the LOA team stepped in to help. "The information that was given to me was extremely helpful, and I'm positive I would have had a different outcome had it not been shared with me, considering I had never been through this process before and had no clue what I was doing," Michelle said. "I can't imagine how much more stressful this would have been without their help!"