



MEMORANDUM

TO: Community Relations Committee
FROM: Stephanie Calvillo
Communications and Marketing Coordinator
DATE: December 9, 2024
SUBJECT: Policy on Recognition of Government, Cultural, and Religious Holidays
for Business Planning and Operations

INTRODUCTION

Staff is seeking review of a proposed policy to expand the local holiday list for purposes of business planning and operations within the Village. The proposed policy would supplement existing Village holidays with additional federal, state, cultural, and religious observances, with the aim of fostering greater awareness, respect in our scheduling practices, and communications. While the policy does not alter Village operational hours, provide additional days off, or modify employee benefits, it emphasizes consideration of the listed holidays for purposes of meeting scheduling and event planning.

The goal of the policy is to promote awareness of these observances, while considering potential impacts on stakeholder availability, government service interruptions, and observances that may affect involvement or participation.

POLICY OVERVIEW

The policy seeks to expand the current recognition of holidays within the Village of Lombard by incorporating additional federal, state, cultural, and religious observances. The intention is not to alter employee leave or Village operational hours, but to guide the planning of meetings, events, and public communications.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- Acknowledge a broader range of cultural, religious, and governmental holidays to improve operational efficiency, increase awareness and respect, and support stakeholder engagement.
- Improve operational planning by considering potential disruptions caused by holidays and observances thereby enhancing coordination and avoiding scheduling conflicts.
- Strengthen engagement, public communications, and event planning through recognition of additional observances, thus increasing awareness and demonstrating respect.

CONTEXT FOR POLICY

- **Alignment with State and Federal Holidays:** Incorporating a comprehensive calendar will help the Village align better with the state and federal holidays which are not

otherwise Village of Lombard Holidays. The expanded calendar will better align Village practices with state and federal holiday schedules, ensuring awareness of office closures, services interruptions, and shifts in stakeholder and employee availability. In the past, recognition of certain State and Federal holidays such as President's Day, Election Day, and Columbus Day which are widely observed and influence the schedules of employees, partners, and constituents may have at times previously been overlooked and/or created public questions regarding availability of services. Recognizing these holidays supports operational planning, particularly when governmental services or essential business functions may be affected by reduced staffing or closures.

- **Acknowledging Demographics:** This policy reflects acknowledgement of the demographic diversity of the Village and its stakeholders. U.S. Census Bureau Decennial Census data reflects the evolution of Lombard local demographics over the years. In 2000, Census data for Lombard showed that 87% of the population identified as white alone, with 7% identifying as Asian alone and 2.7% as Black or African American alone. By 2020, these numbers had changed to 70.8% white alone, 13.1% Asian alone, and 4.6% Black or African American alone. This data reflects increasing diversity amongst Lombard residents. By considering additional cultural and religious observances, this policy acknowledges local demographics and reflects an effort to increase organizational awareness and ensure that Lombard remains a welcoming, respectful, and inclusive community for its residents.
- **Prior Schedule Conflicts and Challenges:** There have been several prior instances where Village operations, meetings, or events have been impacted by overlapping holiday observances and organizational activities. For example:
 - **Public Inquiries:** Public confusion has previously arisen regarding the impact of federal and state holidays on local government services. Certain holidays not currently recognized as Village holidays have previously led to public inquiries about whether local services such as Village operations and trash collection will proceed as usual. Further, Village employees often make referrals to outside governmental agencies and would benefit from awareness of how additional State and Federal holidays may impact operational hours and local service referrals. Shared public information regarding holidays can address this lack of clarity to improve coordination and avoid disruptions to public engagement which can diminish trust in service reliability.
 - **Stakeholder Engagement:** In some cases earlier this year, religious observances of stakeholders overlapped with the timing of staff and public meetings which specifically addressed issues directly related to the communities observing the holiday. Meetings scheduled during holidays where observances may result in reduced participation and absence of stakeholders, particularly those with vested interests can lead to operational impacts, delays in decision making, and the perception of insensitivity. These situations underscore the importance of increased awareness of observances and thoughtful scheduling practices.

- **Staffing Impacts:** Holidays not recognized as local holidays have, at times, previously resulted in staffing challenges. Employees observing additional governmental, religious, or cultural holidays or facing the closure of their children's schools has previously impacted employee availability leading to meeting cancellations and staffing impacts. Awareness of a broader set of holidays can avoid unforeseen staffing shortages, which may impact local service delivery and operational efficiency. Incorporating these additional holidays and anticipating potential staffing impacts in planning mitigates service disruptions and promotes workplace and operational efficiency.

By formalizing the objectives of this proposed policy, the organization can proactively address these challenges, foster improved public engagement, and improve organizational efficiency.

IMPLEMENTATION AND PRACTICES:

To support the goals outlined above, the Village will establish and maintain an annual holiday calendar. This calendar will include:

1. **Village Holidays** – Official Village holidays, consistent with the Village Human Resources Manual, that impact operational business hours and employee benefits.
2. **Federal and State Holidays** – Holidays recognized at the federal and state level, which may affect governmental services and scheduling. No impact to official Village operating hours or employee benefits, but included to ensure awareness of governmental office closures, service interruptions, and key stakeholder availability.
3. **Cultural and Religious Holidays** – Additional holidays and observances from a variety of cultural and religious backgrounds, which may be celebrated or observed within the Lombard community. No impact to official Village operating hours or employee benefits, but may influence employee or stakeholder availability and participation.

The holiday calendar will be updated annually, with input from the Community Relations Committee, and will be accessible on the Village website. Elected officials, management, and employees can reference the holiday calendar when planning meetings, deadlines, and events. Public communications will highlight these holidays where appropriate, emphasizing awareness and respect.

The calendar shall serve as a tool for awareness rather than mandating operational closures. Considerations regarding the calendar may include whether a holiday is likely to involve public closures, governmental service interruptions, reduced availability of stakeholders due to observances, and constraints on timing, such as time-specific traditions or observances. The scheduling of meetings or events on listed holidays is not prohibited but should be considered thoughtfully on a case-by-case basis.

Public communications may align with this approach by acknowledging and informing on significant cultural, religious, and governmental holidays in organizational messaging. These communications shall serve to enhance public communications by increasing understanding, awareness, and engagement and reflect organizational respect for the community it serves.

ALIGNMENT WITH BROADER INITIATIVES

The proposed policy is designed to complement and enhance, rather than replace existing efforts and initiatives aimed at improving public engagement and meeting the informational needs of the Lombard community. This policy aligns with our ongoing strategic commitments to promote accessibility and engagement with all groups within Lombard.

While this policy focuses on the recognition of additional governmental, cultural, and religious holidays, it also complements the Village's ongoing efforts to encourage and support celebrations and observances of these and other significant events through community engagement. Local organizations and groups continue to be welcomed to connect with the community and support local tourism through the events and celebrations that highlight the community and promote broad participation. The Village of Lombard Local Tourism Grant Program, which is widely advertised through a Call for Projects each year, provides financial support for events and celebrations that promote tourism and community interaction. Additionally, the Village welcomes partnerships and support for local Village-run events through its call for event sponsorships.

By incorporating expanded holiday awareness, the Village reinforces its broader goals of ensuring that outreach, communication, and engagement efforts are inclusive, respectful, and reflective of the perspectives and traditions of all residents.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Community Relations Committee approve the draft policy on the Recognition of Government, Cultural, and Religious Holidays for Business Planning and Operations. The policy aligns with the Village's goals of improving operational efficiency while ensuring sensitive planning for meetings, events and public communications.