



COVID-19 Update

As your Human Resources provider, we understand the importance of keeping you updated on the continuous developments of the COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic. There were a number of updates delivered to the public over the weekend by Governor Mike DeWine.

The closure of bars and restaurants lead to many questions around Unemployment Insurance. The executive order issued by Governor DeWine expands the flexibility that Ohioans have to receive Unemployment benefits. These benefits will be available for eligible individuals who are requested by a medical professional, local health authority, or employer to be isolated for quarantined as a consequence of COVID-19. In the state of Ohio, the eligibility waiting period of one week has been waived. Additional information regarding unemployment is attached to this email.

In additional to the closure of bars and restaurants, Governor DeWine expanded the closure to all schools in the State of Ohio and hinted that child care facilities may be the next to close. At this time, there is no confirmation of when this will come. As of today, March 16, 2020 Governor DeWine announced that gyms, movie theaters and other recreational facilities will be closing. It is in the best interest of the employer to communicate with their employees should your organization be forced to close.

The House of Representatives passed the “Families First Coronavirus Response Act”. This act contains several provisions which will impact employers in both the public and private sector with fewer than 500 employees. The Act still has to go through the Senate and be signed off on by President Trump. The Act is NOT in effect currently. This bill would:

1. Provide full-time employees eighty (80) hours of paid sick leave for specific COVID-19 related issues.
2. Part-time employees are entitled to the number of hours of paid sick time equal to the number of hours they work, on average, over a two-week period.
3. Employers with PTO policies are not permitted to change their policies after the enactment to avoid providing employees 14 additional days.
4. The paid sick leave provisions will go into effect 15 days after enactment and expire on 12/31/2020.
5. Employees would be eligible for 12 weeks of job protection under FMLA with additional provisions. Does this apply to smaller clients?
6. Provides \$1 billion in emergency unemployment insurance relief to the states.
7. The Act provides a number of tax credits, including: payroll credit for required paid sick leave, credit for sick leave and family leave for specified self-employed individuals, and payroll credit for paid family leave.

What can employers do?

1. Education employees on the situation and the state of the business.
 - a. In the event of a closure, employees can file for unemployment. See attached.
 - i. If you need Unemployment information translated to Spanish please let us know.
 - ii. In the event that you terminate an employee for cause, please contact your HR Representative so we know to contest the claim.

- b. Employers utilizing the Sheakley Large Group plans benefits will not be cancelled. Benefits will go in to arrears until the employee is paid again. At that time, we will collect the missed premiums.
2. Develop a continuity plan, thinking about:
- a. Essential vs. non-essential employees. Who can work from home if the office is not closed entirely?
 - b. In the event of a full company closure, what tasks still need to get done?
 - c. Will the organization pay employees?
 - i. At this time, it is not required to pay employees. If the Families First Coronavirus Response Act goes through, payment will be required.
 - ii. Employees can still file unemployment if they are not receiving full wages from the company. Example: the employer decides to pay employees 50% of their wages during closure. Employee can file for Unemployment for supplemental payment.
 - d. Will the company pay for benefits? Or, will employees need to elect COBRA?
 - i. Contact your Sheakley HR Representative regarding options for handling benefit coverage.
 - e. Are your customers/vendors operating? Will you allow your employees travel locally or domestically?
 - f. **Encourage employees with live checks to sign up for direct deposit/Sheakley pay card.**
 - i. In the event that Sheakley operations move to “work from home” there will be no ability to print live checks.

New information is being released daily, we will continue to keep you updated as information is received.