



August 12, 2020

## Employee Options for School Closures

Schools across the state are making different decisions about school starting and we wanted to remind you of all your options regarding school closures.

This message contains a lot of information. If you have any questions or need help in deciding how you should proceed, please contact HR. They will make sure you understand all your options and help you make the best decisions you can.

If your child's school is closed (including closure on certain days of the week) and you have to miss work to provide care or supervision to your child, you have several options for paid time off from work.

1. **IYR PTO, Vacation, and Sick Leave:** You may always use any accrued paid time off (PTO), vacation or sick leave for this purpose.
2. **Emergency Paid Sick Leave:** You may also use any of the 2 weeks of Federal Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) you have remaining.
3. **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) Expanded Family Medical Leave:** You may also use FFCRA Expanded Family Medical Leave (EFML). Some key questions you might have about this leave are:
  - **Is EFML paid time off?** Unlike regular family medical leave, which is unpaid, EFML is paid time off. After 2 weeks you will be paid two-thirds (2/3) your regular rate of pay when you use this leave.
  - **Am I eligible for EFML?** You must have worked at IYR for at least 30 days to be eligible for EFML.
  - **For what reasons may I take EFML?** The reason for taking leave must be that you are unable to work, or work from home, because you are caring for your son or daughter whose school or place of care has been closed, or the child care provider of your son or daughter is unavailable, due to reasons related to COVID-19.
    - The school or place of care must be closed for COVID 19 reasons.
    - Closed means "physically closed." If your child's school is open for "online learning only," the school is considered closed.
    - If your child's school is open for live classes on some days, and on other days offers online services only, you may qualify for the days the school is not physically open.
    - If your child's school is open and you opt out of live classes and choose online schooling for your child, you would not be eligible for EFML.
    - You would not be eligible for EFML if another suitable individual – such as a co-parent, co-guardian, or the usual childcare provider – is available to provide for your child's needs.
  - **How long does EFML last?** EFML provides 12 weeks of job protected time off.
  - **Do I have to use EFML all at once?** EFML can be used intermittently (a little bit at a time) as you need it.
  - **The first 2 weeks of EFML are unpaid.**
    - You can use any remaining days from your 2 weeks of Federal Emergency Paid Sick Leave (EPSL) to cover the first two weeks.
    - If you have already used all of your 2 weeks of Federal EPSL you may use any accrued PTO, vacation, or sick leave.

- If you have no paid leave benefit available, you may request to use any IYR Pandemic leave time that you have not previously used.
- **How does my use of regular family medical leave affect EFML?** The 12 weeks of EFML is in a rolling 12-month period that starts on your first use of the leave. If you have already used some regular family medical leave or EFML earlier this year, that amount of leave is deducted from the 12-week total and you will not have a full 12 weeks to use now.
- **When will I receive my EFML pay?** Any EFML time entered on your timesheet will be paid on a separate check on your regular pay day, and in the same manner. If you have direct deposit, your EFML pay will be direct deposited as well.
- **Do I have to complete any paperwork to take EFML?** You must complete an enrollment form to confirm your eligibility for EFML. The enrollment form is available on the employee portal or from HR.
- **Should I stay in touch with HR during my EFML?** As with regular Family Medical Leave, please regularly stay in touch with HR while you are away from work.

#### 4. **Unemployment Benefits:**

- **In Idaho:** The Idaho Department of Labor has determined that if you are unable to work or have reduced work hours because you are caring for your son or daughter whose school or place of care has been closed, or the child care provider of your son or daughter is unavailable, due to reasons related to COVID-19, then you are “unavailable for work” and therefore may not be eligible for unemployment benefits.
- **In Oregon:** Oregon **does allow** you to claim unemployment benefits if you are unable to work or have reduced work hours because you are taking care of your son or daughter whose school or place of care has been closed, or the child care provider of your son or daughter is unavailable, due to reasons related to COVID-19.

#### 5. **IYR Support for Staff with Children in Online Schooling:** Since many of Idaho’s schools are delaying or considering delaying in person learning, we want to support parents or caregivers to school age children by helping them make the best decision for the physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing of their children. For some students, at home learning in an unsupervised setting is not the best decision for their overall wellbeing, and IYR will support parent and caregivers in providing the best environment possible for our youth. We are providing several options for our staff who are having to make these difficult decisions.

- First, we will continue to have as many staff as possible working from home. Work with your supervisor to determine if you are able to work from home.
- For those staff whose positions don’t allow for at-home work, we are asking our managers to provide as much flexibility as possible in scheduling hours, which may allow caregivers to provide support at home during school hours.
- We will continue to assist staff with understanding their various options for wages and benefits while caring for their children. Please reach out to our HR department to assist you with understanding your options.
- **New Additional Option:** For those caregivers who do not believe any of the previous options are best for their school-age children, IYR will work to create online learning spaces in each of our locations, wherever appropriate. Caregivers using this option will be able to have their children onsite while they are working their jobs. We will all work together to respond quickly to the needs and adapt to make this work for everyone. **Detailed guidelines for this option are attached to this message.**

**Please remember: Contact HR if you have any questions or if you need help figuring out your options.**