



1200 North Seventh Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102

January 6, 2021

Karla Hodge  
AFSCME Council 13  
4031 Executive Park Drive  
Harrisburg, PA 17111-1599

RE: COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick Leave  
Commencing January 1, 2021

Dear Ms. Hodge:

PHEAA continues to be committed to supporting employees who are impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic while also maintaining the operational needs of the Agency to provide services to Pennsylvania students and their families. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act of 2020 (FFCRA) provides emergency paid sick leave under the Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act (EPSLA) and expanded family and medical leave under the Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act (EFMLEA) for certain employees impacted by COVID-19. The Emergency Paid Sick and Expanded Family Medical Leave Policy issued by PHEAA on April 1, 2020, provided guidance on the use of leave under EPSLA and EFMLEA through December 31, 2020. As the parties are aware, both the EPSLA and EFMLEA expired on December 31, 2020.

Toward the goal of continuing to support our workforce through this pandemic, PHEAA will provide to eligible employees up to ten (10) days of emergency paid sick leave (ES) beginning January 1, 2021 through either December 31, 2021 or until such a time that the provision is no longer deemed necessary (whichever occurs first), if the federal government fails to extend or amend EPSLA to provide additional leave entitlements in 2021. Should any federal or state legislation be passed that provides for an additional COVID-19-related paid leave entitlement during 2021, ES Leave under this side letter shall end on the effective date of that new legislation. The ES Leave provided for in this side letter is not available for qualifying events related to childcare as was available to a limited number of eligible employees under the FFCRA. Eligibility for this new leave is as follows:

1) Eligibility

- (a) ES Leave is available to all employees, exempt and non-exempt, including temporary and part-time employees. Employees working as annuitants are not eligible for ES Leave under any circumstances. This leave is available to an eligible employee if the employee is unable to work or telework due to the qualifying events as outlined below, and the employee is able to provide documentation, as soon as practicable, to establish the qualifying event.
- (b) Benefit eligibility varies for full-time and part-time employees.
  - i. Full-time employees, defined as those who work 40 hours per week, are eligible for up to ten (10) days (80 hours) of ES Leave.





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- ii. Part-time employees, defined as those who work less than 40 hours per week, are eligible for up to ten (10) days of ES Leave. Part-time employees are entitled to leave for their average number of normally worked hours in a two-week period.
- (c) ES Leave is available to an otherwise eligible employee on their first day of employment with PHEAA.
- (d) Use of EPSLA leave by an employee in 2020 does not disqualify the employee from use of ES Leave available pursuant to this side letter if the employee is otherwise eligible due to a qualifying event in 2021. Additionally, regardless of whether an employee used leave in 2020 under the EPSLA, it is agreed that the employee will have the opportunity to use up to 10 days of ES Leave in pursuant to this side letter.

## 2) Qualifying Events

- (a) ES Leave is capped at ten (10) days total regardless of whether the employee has one or more qualifying events as provided for below:
  - (1) Employee is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order, issued by a governmental entity, related to COVID-19.
    - i. Employee shall receive up to ten (10) days of ES Leave.
    - ii. Employee shall receive their regular hourly rate of pay, up to \$511 per day or \$5,110 in total.
    - iii. Leave under criterion a.1(i) must be used in full consecutive workdays until the qualifying event no longer exists; except when an employee is required to leave the worksite prior to the end of their work shift, leave may be used to cover the hours remaining in the work shift.
  - (2) Employee has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.
    - i. Employee shall receive up to ten (10) days of ES Leave
    - ii. Employee shall receive their regular hourly rate of pay, up to \$511 per day or \$5,110 in total.
    - iii. Leave under criterion a.2(i) must be used in full consecutive workdays until the qualifying event no longer exists; except when an employee is required to leave the worksite prior to the end of their work shift, leave may be used to cover the hours remaining in the work shift.



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- (3) Employee is experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and is affirmatively seeking a medical diagnosis.
  - i. Employee shall receive up to ten (10) days of ES Leave.
  - ii. Employee shall receive their regular hourly rate of pay, up to \$511 per day or \$5,110 in total.
  - iii. Leave under criterion a.4(i) must be used in full consecutive workdays until the qualifying event no longer exists; except when an employee is required to leave the worksite prior to the end of their work shift, leave may be used to cover the hours remaining in the work shift.
  
- (4) Employee is caring for an individual who is subject to an order as described in criterion a.1(i) or advised to self-quarantine as described in criterion a.2(i), above.
  - i. Employee shall receive up to ten (10) days of ES Leave.
  - ii. Employee shall receive 66.67% of their regular hourly rate of pay, up to \$200 per day or \$2,000 in total.
  - iii. Leave under criterion a.4(i) must be used in full consecutive workdays until the qualifying event no longer exists; except when an employee is required to leave the worksite prior to the end of their work shift, leave may be used to cover the hours remaining in the work shift.

### 3) Forfeiture and Expiration of Leave

- (a) Employees are not entitled to reimbursement for any unused ES Leave upon their termination, resignation, retirement, or other separation from employment.
- (b) ES Leave does not carry-over from one year to the next and expires on December 31, 2021 or until such a time that the provision is no longer deemed necessary, whichever occurs first.
- (c) If, subsequent to the execution of this side letter, any federal or state legislation is passed that provides for an additional COVID-19-related paid leave entitlement during 2021, ES Leave under this side letter shall end on the effective date of that new legislation.

### 4) Paid and Unpaid Absences.

- (a) Employees on an approved paid or unpaid absence on January 1, 2021, shall not be entitled to utilize ES Leave until such time that they were normally scheduled to return to work, unless the employee is on leave due to a Qualifying Event under criteria 2.a(1) through 2.a(4) above.

In addition to the ES leave provided above, PHEAA shall also provide up to ten (10) days of administrative leave (AL) beginning January 1, 2021 through either December 31, 2021 or until such a time that the provision is no longer deemed necessary (whichever occurs first), to those employees who have exhausted all ES Leave entitlements provided herein, as well as all earned and anticipated annual






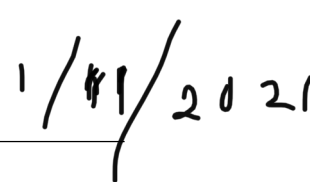
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and sick leave entitlements. Eligibility and approval for said administrative leave will be handled through the Agency's COVID-19 Temporary Workplace Adjustment Request Procedure.

It is distinctly understood that this agreement shall not set precedent and is without prejudice to either party's position on any current or future matters. Please indicate your concurrence with the above understanding by signing below and returning a copy of the executed agreement to this office.

Sincerely,

Kara L. Kupchella  
Employee and Labor Relations Specialist  
PHEAA Human Resources

Karla Hodge

Date

copy: File

