Navigating the Employment Impacts of COVID-19

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April 14, 2020
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Overview

- **Families First Coronavirus Response Act**
  - Emergency FMLA
  - Paid Sick Leave
- **CARES Act**
  - Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PAU)
  - Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)
**FFCRA-Emergency FMLA**

- **Eligibility** = employee worked for the company for 30 days
- **Qualifying Reason** = the employee is unable to work (or telework) because they need to care for their child whose school or place of care is not available because of COVID-19
- *have to certify no other suitable adult available*
- **Benefit** = 12 weeks of leave (combined with other FMLA); first 10 days unpaid, remaining paid at 2/3

**FFCRA-Paid Sick Leave**

- **Qualifying Reason** =
  - **Category 1**: Employee is:
    - subject to federal, state or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;
    - advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to COVID-19 related concerns; or
    - exhibiting symptoms of COVID 19 and seeking a diagnosis.
  - **Category 2**: Employee is caring for
    - an individual that is subject to a reason in Category 1; or
    - their child whose school or child care provider is closed/unavailable due to COVID-19
### FFCRA-Paid Sick Leave

- **Eligibility** = full-time or part-time employee
- **Benefit** = Paid leave
  - 80 hours for full-time (prorated for part-time)
  - Category 1 Reason = 100% pay
  - Category 2 Reason = 2/3 pay

### Exemption for Small Employers:

Employers with fewer than 50 employees can argue an exemption from EFMLA and EPSL if:

- the leave results in expenses and financial obligations exceeding available revenues causing business to cease operating at a minimal capacity;
- the employee’s absence creates a substantial risk to the financial health or operational capabilities because of their specialized skills, knowledge, or responsibilities; or
- there are not enough workers to cover the work of the employee requesting leave and such services are needed for the small business to operate at a minimal capacity.
FFCRA-Small Business Specifics

- **No Civil Liability for EFMLA**: Employers with fewer than 50 employees cannot be sued for a EFMLA violation

Unemployment Benefits – COVID-19 Pandemic

- Title II provides 2 ways unemployment insurance (UI) benefits will be available from 1-27-20 through 12-31-20:
  A. **Normal Method** – Employee meets UI requirements of applicable State law (normally State where he/she worked); or
  B. **COVID-19-Related Method** - Employee does *not* meet those State requirements but meets the requirements for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA).
Option A – Normal Eligibility – State Unemployment Benefits

Normally eligible for benefits:

- Unless discharged for misconduct; or
- Unless resigned without good cause attributable to work; or
- Unless not ready (available), willing (actively seeking), and able (fit for duty) to work; or
- Unless has insufficient earnings history.

Option B – COVID-19-Related Eligibility – Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

Will be eligible for benefits:

#1 If otherwise able to work and available to work within the meaning of applicable State law, except the individual is unemployed, partially unemployed, or unable or unavailable to work because of 1 of 11 designated COVID-19-related reasons; or

#2 If self-employed, seeking part-time employment, does not have sufficient work history, or otherwise would not qualify for normal benefits and meets the requirements of #1 above.
Duration of COVID-19-Related Eligibility:

- As long as unemployment or inability to work continues because of COVID-19
- For the number of weeks that the individual is not entitled to normal UI benefits
- For weeks beginning on or after 1-27-20 and ending on or before 12-31-20
- For a maximum of 39 weeks

Exclusions – Not Eligible for Benefits:

- If has the ability to telework with pay; or
- If receiving paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits (regardless of whether there is a COVID-19-related qualifying reason), including paid leave under FFCRA.
Unemployment Benefits – COVID-19 Pandemic

Amount of Benefits
- Normal weekly unemployment benefit amount (as determined under applicable State law)

*Plus* Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)
- $600/week through July 31, 2020
- *If the individual is eligible to receive at least one dollar ($1) of underlying benefits for the claimed week, the claimant will receive the full $600 FPUC.*

Unemployment Benefits – COVID-19 Pandemic

Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) provides up to 13 weeks of federally funded benefits to qualified individuals who:
- Have exhausted all rights to regular compensation under State law or Federal law with respect to a benefit year that ended on or after July 1, 2019;
- Have no rights to regular compensation with respect to a week under any other state UC law or Federal UC law, or to compensation under any other Federal law;
- Are not receiving compensation with respect to a week under the UC law of Canada; and
- Are able to work, available to work, and actively seeking work, although states must offer flexibility on “actively seeking work” where there are COVID-19 impacts and constraints.
Unemployment Benefits – COVID-19 Pandemic

- Waiting week is waived (through 12-31-20)
- FPUC benefit (the $600/week) paid weekly either with the normal weekly payment or as a separate payment (up to the State)
- Special rules for non-profits and government entities
- Shared Work/Work Sharing Programs

Q: Can I quit my job to collect unemployment and the $600 weekly FPUC payment?

A: If an employer offers sick leave and/or other leave or remote work options to address COVID-19 in lieu of layoffs, then a person who quits on his/her own volition would not qualify for unemployment benefits. Quitting without good cause to obtain additional funds under the regular unemployment program or the CARES Act qualifies as fraud. If an individual obtains benefits through fraud, the individual is ineligible for any additional benefit payments, must pay back the benefits received and is subject to criminal prosecution.
Unemployment Benefits – COVID-19 Pandemic

Missouri DOL – Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Unemployment Insurance Benefits Questions and Answers for Employers and Employees:

https://labor.mo.gov/coronavirus#mini-panel-coronavirus-tabs2
COVID-19 Resources

- DOL FAQ: https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/pandemic/ffca-questions

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