



The University of Vermont

To: UVM Community
From: Jes Kraus, Chief Human Resources Officer
Human Resource Services
Date: May 22, 2020
RE: Voluntary Furlough Program

Dear Colleagues,

The University of Vermont is offering a Voluntary Furlough Program (“Program”) to eligible employees effective June 16, 2020. The purpose of this Program is to create cost savings through the reduction of total salary expenditures to help offset revenue losses caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and to respond to employee inquiries about the possibility of helping via voluntary furloughs.

Under the Program, eligible employees can voluntarily elect to take time off without pay for either:

- a consecutive period of at least 10 work days between Tuesday, June 16, 2020 and Monday, August 31, 2020 or
- at least ten single, intermittent full days between June 16, 2020 and August 31, 2020. Employees who wish to take intermittent days must take the same number of furlough days each week (i.e., 1 day per week, 2 days per week, etc.).

Both exempt and non-exempt regular employees who are not part of a bargaining unit are eligible to participate, subject to supervisory and departmental approval. Furloughs will be treated as an unpaid leave of absence, and will not affect FTE or contract term. Employees in grant-funded positions or on H-1B visa status are not eligible for furloughs.

Please note that this is an entirely voluntary program, and no one should feel any pressure to participate. There are absolutely no consequences if you choose not to participate.

Employment and Benefit Status

Participating employees will remain employees of the University and will continue to receive University benefits, including the University contribution toward all benefits plans. Employees must continue to make their usual contributions toward their benefit plan premiums through payroll deduction.

Accruals

Employees on intermittent furlough days will continue to accrue paid time off. Employees on consecutive furlough days will not accrue paid time off for any pay period in which they did not receive a paycheck.

Retirement Contributions

Since retirement plan contributions by the University are based on wages earned, there will be no employer retirement contributions for furlough days. Wage garnishments, court-ordered and other legally-mandated deductions will be administered in accordance with legal requirements.

Performance of Work and Use of Leave Accruals

Employees may not substitute vacation or other accrued paid leave time for a furlough day. Employees may not perform work for the University during any furlough day. This means that employees may not check University email, make or take calls on University business, or otherwise engage in work for the University during any furlough day. Furlough days will not be counted for purposes of calculating overtime.

Procedure to Apply

Requests to participate must be made between Tuesday, May 26, 2020 and Friday, June 5, 2020 via an Election Form (https://www.uvm.edu/sites/default/files/Human-Resource-Services-and-Operations/Forms/Voluntary_Furlough_Form_.docx.)

- Furlough requests must be reviewed by both the employee's supervisor and Dean, Director, or Chair (or their designee) to determine if the request would allow necessary staffing levels for business and academic continuity.
- Requests will be approved at the discretion of the supervisor and Dean, Director, or Chair (or their designee) to ensure that the requesting employee's department can continue to meet business and academic program needs in the employee's absence.
- Denial of any request is final, and is not subject to any appeal or grievance procedure.

Employees may be asked to change their requested dates for furlough to ensure business or academic continuity. **Employees will be notified of their approved furlough days on or before Friday, June 12, 2020.**

As this Program's purpose is to achieve cost savings, temporary or other employees may not be hired to cover for absences. The University may not incur overtime expenses to cover for a furloughed employee. Once an employee begins participation in the program, they may not withdraw except in cases of undue hardship as determined and approved by the University.

Each completed Election Form must be sent to the Payroll Office by email payroll@uvm.edu after it is approved by the employee's supervisor and Dean, Director, or Chair (or their designee). **The approved Election Form must be submitted to Payroll on or before Friday, June 12, 2020.**

If you have any questions about this Program, please contact hrsinfo@uvm.edu.

Sincerely,

Jes Kraus
Chief Human Resources Officer

Please Note: Effective May 26, 2020, employees represented by Teamsters and United Electrical unions are also eligible to participate