

Westmont Staff Furlough Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Which staff are included in the furlough?

A: Insurance benefits eligible staff except those earning \$20.50/hr. or less.

Q: Can I take the furlough in partial hours, days or weeks?

A: With advance supervisory approval, hourly staff furloughs must be taken only in full days (your normal daily schedule for a full day, if your daily schedule is less than 8 hours per day). The days do not need to be consecutive.

For salaried employees, with advance supervisory approval furlough days must be taken 5 days within a single pay period (pay periods are the 1st through 15th of the month, and the 16th through the last day of the month). Unfortunately, California wage and hour laws require salaried employees to take all 5 furloughed days at the same time, in the same pay period. A furlough day may not be taken in a week where any work is performed. This will generally mean that furloughs will be taken Monday through Friday of the same week.

Q: May I take a furlough during a week that includes a holiday?

A: Yes, for hourly staff. Furlough days may be taken in any week with previous approval and may be taken in a week with a paid holiday.

For salaried employees, furlough days may only be taken in a workweek where no work is performed. Paid holidays do not count as part of the five furlough days.

Q: Will I be eligible for Unemployment Insurance?

A: The decision of eligibility for unemployment is based on several factors and determined by the Employment Development Department (EDD). An employee may be eligible for weekly unemployment compensation if during a particular week the employee earns less than their maximum weekly unemployment benefit amount and meets other benefits criteria established by the state of California. The likelihood of eligibility would be greater when an employee chooses to take all of their furlough days in consecutive work days and have their pay reduced accordingly. Employees may visit the EDD website for more information on unemployment benefits at <https://edd.ca.gov/unemployment/>.

Q: Can I use my accrued vacation or sick leave to cover the furlough?

A: No, a furlough is unpaid.

Q: How will this affect my benefits?

A: While you are in a furloughed status, your elected benefits (e.g. medical, dental, vision, EAP, LTD, life insurance) will continue and you will be responsible for paying your portion of your benefit premiums and pre-tax contributions. If your pay is not enough to cover the employee portion of elected benefit costs, you will be advised of your options for paying any remaining benefit premium payments.

Q: How does a furlough affect my retirement?

A: The employee and college share of retirement contributions are based on regular paid wages. A reduction in pay/salary, as a result of the furlough, will reduce the base amount used to calculate the retirement plan contribution amounts for both the employee and college.

Q: Are Faculty members affected?

A: Faculty are not affected by the furlough, but will receive a 2% pay reduction effective 9/30/20.

Q: Are student employees impacted?

A: No. The furlough only applies to staff.

Q: When do I need to take my furlough?

A: Work with your supervisor to schedule your time away in advance, before the end of the fiscal year, which is May 31, 2021. Furlough days should be taken during your normal schedule. (If you are scheduled to work less than 12 months, the furlough must occur during the months you are scheduled to work and before May 31, 2021.)

Q: How much notice is required prior to taking furlough days?

A: If you are exempt (salaried), the college requires 2 weeks' notice before your furlough begins. Exempt staff will be copied on an email from their supervisor to Payroll providing (at minimum) the 2 week notice of approved furlough, including beginning and ending dates of the furlough week.

For non-exempt (hourly) employees, once your supervisor has approved the time away, simply note your furlough hours on your time sheet with an "f".

Q: Am I expected to work while on furlough? May I voluntarily work unpaid during my furlough?

A: No. During the time that you are on furlough, you are not permitted to perform your job duties or any other duties at the college, voluntarily or otherwise.