

# LOA on COVID-19 IMPACTS

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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## **COST OF LIVING ADJUSTMENTS (COLA)**

### **When will I get my COLA for FY 2020-21?**

COLA for Fiscal Year 2020-21 will be given in full on January 1, 2021.

### **When will I get my COLA for FY 2021-22?**

COLA for Fiscal Year 2021-22 is currently scheduled for July 1, 2021. If the City completes our Class/Comp study prior to March 31, 2021, we will enter into bargaining and this could impact the date of our COLA.

### **How do I know what the COLA will be?**

The COLA is calculated by looking at the annual increase in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) (as measured by the annual change in the index between the 2nd Half two years ago and the 2nd Half of last year) for the West Class A Cities, published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor. However, in no event shall the salary increase be less than one percent (1%) or greater than five percent (5.0%).

For FY 202-21 this formula results in a 2.9% COLA.

## **STEP INCREASES/MERIT PAY**

### **When will I get my step increase for FY 2020-21?**

If you are due a step increase in the next fiscal year, it will be delayed by 6 months. For example, if your classification anniversary is July 15<sup>th</sup> then you would receive your step on

January 15, 2021. If your anniversary date is June 15<sup>th</sup> then you will still receive your step on June 15, 2020 (for the current FY) and then in the next FY your step would be delayed by 6 months to December 15, 2021.

**When will I get my step increase for FY 2021-22?**

Step increases for FY 21-22 are on schedule per your regular anniversary date. The 6-month deferral for FY 21-22 does not change your anniversary date.

**My classification is on the Merit Pay system, how am I impacted?**

If you are in a classification subject to Merit Pay, your pay increases (if due) will be subject to the same 6-month delay as a step increase.

**Does this change my anniversary date?**

No, your anniversary date is not changed as a result of this Agreement.

## **FURLOUGH HOURS**

**How many furlough hours do I have to take?**

For those making more than \$29.55/hr, the requirement is for 40 furlough hours.

**What if I'm a part-time employee?**

For current part-time workers, your furlough hours are pro-rated as follows:

0.9 FTE	36hrs
0.8 FTE	32hrs
0.7 FTE	28hrs
0.6 FTE	24hrs
0.5 FTE	20hrs

If your % of a full time equivalent (FTE) isn't shown, you can use the formula of 40hrs times the % of your FTE.

**What if I'm close to retirement?**

Members who announce their retirement and leave City employment by January 31, 2021 are excused from the mandatory furlough hours. Because furlough hours must be taken by Oct. 31, 2020, expect to discuss your retirement plans with the City before then.

**How do I schedule furlough hours?**

Reach out to your immediate supervisor. Different bureaus/divisions/groups are managing their coverage in different ways and this coordination will be through your supervisor or manager.

**Do I need to take furlough hours in whole days?**

No. Our Agreement with the City allows you to furlough as little as 1 hour all the way up to the full 40 hours. How you opt to schedule your furlough hours is up to you, but you will need to work with management because furloughs cannot result in the need for overtime. How you opt to schedule your furlough hours can also have different financial implications – see Work Share/ Unemployment Benefits Section.

**What if I want to take more furlough hours?**

If you are interested in taking more furlough hours, you may do so as a Voluntary Schedule Reduction – see next section.

**TEMPORARY SCHEDULE REDUCTION**

**How much can I reduce my hours?**

You may reduce your schedule anywhere from 0.9FTE (72 hours per pay period) and 0.5FTE (40 hours per pay period) for the next fiscal year.

**When do I have to start the reduced schedule?**

The LOA states that schedule reductions will be July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021 unless the City and employee agree to end the reduced schedule sooner. The City has also indicated they would be open to employees starting a reduced schedule earlier because these unpaid days are being coded the same as furlough days.

**Will this put my position at risk now or in the future?**

The purpose of the LOA is to ensure your position remains a full-time budgeted position. The City is coding the reduction in hours as a furlough for the entire year for the same reason.

**Does this impact my health care benefits?**

No. If you were a full-time employee before the temporary reduced schedule, your benefits will be maintained at the full-time rate. If you were part-time and opted to further reduce your schedule, your benefits would be maintained at your previous rate even if your total hours are further reduced.

**Will this change my anniversary date?**

No. We negotiated to have anniversary dates maintained so as to not penalize members for offering a savings to the City.

**What if I want/need to return to full-time before the end of the fiscal year?**

The Agreement allows for employees to return to full time sooner than one year if the City agrees.

### **Why not simple agree to more furlough hours?**

In our membership poll many members expressed the willingness to take more than 5 furlough days. Many also indicated they would be willing to take more in place of employees that couldn't afford 10 days. Ultimately, we could not find a way to administer such a "bank" with the City. The alternative was to allow employees who are able to take more days to do so in a way that provides the maximum flexibility and meters those days across the entire fiscal year rather than requiring all the hours to be taken by Oct. 31, 2020.

### **Am I eligible for Work Share if I opt for a Voluntary Schedule Reduction?**

Yes, you may be eligible for Work Share. The City will be coding these unpaid days as furlough days. You still have to meet the State's criteria of a 20-40% reduction in hours. Reducing from a full-time employee to a 0.5 FTE, for example, would make you ineligible under the State's criteria.

Additionally, the City's Work Share application is currently valid through May 31, 2021. Furlough days (via a reduced schedule) in the month of June 2021 would not be eligible for Work Share compensation.

### **Can Limited Duration employees reduce schedules?**

A temporary reduced schedule must be approved by your bureau management. Please note, as a Limited Duration employee, you may not be eligible for Work Share.

## **WORK SHARE/UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS**

### **What is Work Share and how is it different than regular unemployment?**

The Work Share program allows employers to leverage unemployment insurance to subsidize a portion of lost wages for employees whose work time is reduced due to market downturns or other business stressors. The program is administered by the State Employment Department, same as regular unemployment benefits. These are your earned unemployment benefits, metered out over a longer period of time – up to one year. Claiming Work Share benefits differs from regular unemployment because the application process is handled by your employer rather than directly with the State.

### **How do I know if I am eligible for Work Share?**

To be eligible for Work Share you must have worked for at least part-time for one (1) year, or full-time for six (6) months for the City. If you have an unemployment insurance claim against another state or have previously exhausted your Oregon unemployment insurance benefits, you may not be eligible to participate in the program. Temporary, seasonal, casual, limited-duration staff, and working retirees are not eligible to participate in the Work Share program.

You can find the Work Share Handbook, an FAQ, and application forms on the City's website [here](#).

**Where do I find the forms to apply?**

You can find the Work Share Handbook, an FAQ, and application forms on the City's website [here](#).

To be eligible for Work Share, you must first fill out the Work Share Initial Claim Form (available [here](#)), and submit it directly to your Human Resources Business Partner. This can be accomplished by uploading the forms via a secure link sent from your HRBP. If you are unable to access or submit electronically, please speak to your supervisor – the Union cannot help you with enrollment.

Additional forms and information for Work Share include: (1) tax withholding form (for those who wish to have taxes taken out), (2) electronic deposit form (for those who wish to have Work Share benefits deposited directly into their bank account), (3) Report of Additional Income form (to report income from an additional job or pensions/annuities/retirement), and (4) US Bank ReliaCard information. If you do not enroll in direct deposit, your payments will be placed on a ReliaCard.

**Does applying for Work Share give me access to CARES Act payments?**

Yes. CARES Act payments of \$600 per week are currently available through the week ending July 25, 2020. Any week you qualify for Work Share before July 25, 2020, you also qualify for a CARES Act payment. This will be automatically distributed by the State with your other benefits.

**Can I receive CARES Act payments if I don't qualify for Work Share?**

Yes, you may still qualify for the \$600 CARES Act payment if you qualify for regular unemployment benefits. For example, if you take the full 40 hours of furlough all in one week you could qualify for regular unemployment benefits.

**What about the "waiting week"?**

The Governor has indicated the one week waiting period is waived and will be retroactive back to the start of the CARES Act (April 3, 2020). The Oregon Unemployment Department has indicated they are working to retroactively pay any qualifying applicant who was subject to the waiting week.

**I live in Washington. Am I still eligible for Oregon benefits?**

According to the Oregon Unemployment Department, you should file a claim for benefits in the state in which you work. This includes benefits through the Work Share program. If you have an unemployment claim in another state, you may not be eligible in Oregon.

## AUXILIARY STATUS

### **What is Auxiliary Status, it's not in our Collective Bargaining Agreement?**

Auxiliary Status is a temporary status that was negotiated as part of our LOA for addressing the economic impacts of COVID-19. It is a tool to avoid a permanent layoff where a bureau believes that revenue may become available to support a position that currently cannot be supported.

Auxiliary Status is unpaid, but you remain a City employee, retain your full healthcare benefits, and qualify for unemployment benefits. An employee may or may not be asked to work a limited number of hours while in Auxiliary Status, but would be paid regular wages for all hours worked. An employee may not remain in Auxiliary Status for longer than 12 weeks.

### **Does the City have to give me notice before placing me on Auxiliary Status?**

Yes, you would have notice that the City has identified your position for a possible layoff. The first step before Auxiliary Status is to look for temporary redeployment opportunities.

### **Do I have a choice to refuse Auxiliary Status?**

Yes, but it is likely to result in a permanent layoff. If you are not the least senior member in the workgroup needing to deploy Auxiliary Status, you may refuse on those grounds and the less senior employee would be subject to placement on Auxiliary Status.

Because Auxiliary Status is temporary, it does not initiate the formal bumping language in Article 20 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### **I will be taking parental leave and/or Short-Term Disability Leave before Oct. 31, 2020. How does this all apply to me?**

For situations where you may be taking unpaid leave for reasons other than furlough or you may be interested in reducing your schedule following a return from parental leave, please contact your HR Business Partner to work through your various options.

### **Can I be redeployed to another job rather than receive a layoff notice?**

Yes. As part of our Agreement with the City, we negotiated language that requires the City to examine opportunities for temporary redeployment before any member is laid-off.