Updates to Union’s Time Away from Work Benefits
Why are these changes happening?
How did we get here?
What is changing?
When will these changes happen?
What else should you know?
Questions
Why are these changes happening?

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

• Equity
  Accrual of vacation and sick leave by pay status and years of service

• Simplicity
  Service-based accruals / floating holidays / discretionary day / personal business leave

• Flexibility / Inclusivity
  Accruals reset to zero every January with limited carry-over / bereavement leave

• Promote well-being
  Ability to use time, balance of “discretionary” and shared days off

• Meet operational and services needs
  Able to manage time off amount and work gets done
How did we get here?

HOLISTIC EXAMINATION

• Union Staff Council
• Benefits Committee
• Legal counsel review
• Senior Staff
• ITS and Payroll
What is changing?

20 days of vacation/personal leave (VPL)
• Vacation and personal leave consolidated into one bucket
• Time accrues on a continuous basis; does not reset every January
• Will no longer lose time at year end

15 holidays and recess days
• 2 summer recess days alongside Independence Day, starting in 2024
• Discretionary day discontinued after 2023
• Net gain of 5 shared days off since 2021

Sick leave for salaried staff handled same as hourly

More inclusive bereavement/trauma leave (BTL)
Vacation/Personal Leave (VPL)

Why consolidate vacation and personal leave?
- Eliminates having to figure out which type of leave to use
- Prevents inequities from different interpretations
- Use sick leave for health-related appointments
- Accommodate schedule adjustments, when possible

Why 20 days of VPL?
- Vacation increasing for 180 hourly staff hired since 2014
- Rebalanced to a manageable amount and still get work done
- 6 new holidays and recess days; net increase of 5 days since 2021
- Vacation time no longer lost at year end
- More inclusive bereavement/trauma leave
Vacation/Personal Leave (VPL)

How is VPL accrued?

- Hourly: 6.15 hours every biweekly pay period (26 pay periods annually)
- Salaried: 6.67 hours every semimonthly pay period (24 pay periods annually)
- Prorated for less than 40 hours/week or 12 months/year
- Time accrues on a continuous basis; does not reset to zero every January
- Carry-over limit no longer applies; no time is lost at year end
- May borrow up to 80 hours, with supervisor approval (subject to prorating)

How much VPL can I accrue?

- Accrual stops if maximum balances is reached; resumes once used
- Maximum balance is 160 hours (subject to prorating)
- Once maximum balance takes effect, you do not lose VPL at year end
- Plan vacations in advance to avoid hitting your maximum balance
Holidays and Recess Days

Summer Recess
• Scheduled alongside Independence Day, starting in 2024: July 3 and 5
• What if July 4 falls on a Wednesday, Saturday or Sunday?
• Discretionary day eliminated after this year (use by year end, if not used on July 3)
• Increases number of “shared” days off to 15; net increase of 5 days off since 2021

What if I’m required to work on these days?
• Alternative days off replaces floating (“banked”) holidays
• Scheduled in advance during the same or next pay period
• Can be scheduled later in extenuating circumstances (e.g., winter recess)
Sick Leave

What is (and isn’t) changing?

• Salaried staff sick leave handled the same as for hourly staff
• Makes policy more equitable; better compliance with NYS law
• Only use when not working
• 80 hours (10 days) to use each calendar year (prorated if less than 100% of full-time)
• Accrue 3.33 hours each semimonthly pay period (24 pay periods)
• Revised excessive sick leave policy; consultation with HR required
• Hourly staff sick leave not changing
• Can be used for health care appointments; this isn’t new

Yes, sick leave rules are still confusing

• New York paid sick leave law requires carry over of all unused sick leave
• Continuous accrual with a maximum balance not allowed
• We hope NYS will make changes
Bereavement/Trauma Leave (BTL)

What has changed?
- Covers absences due to traumatic events or to mourn a death, including non-relatives
- Examples of traumatic events in the Employee Handbook, but not exhaustive
- Typically 1 to 5 days, but no set amount per type of occurrence

What if I need more than 5 days?
- Consultation with HR required
- Other resources or forms of leave considered
When will these changes happen?

**Vacation/Personal Leave (VPL)**

- Hourly staff – pay period that is paid on October 20
- Any unused personal business leave added to VPL balance
- Salaried staff – pay period that is paid on October 1
- Maximum VPL balance takes effect January 1, 2024
- VPL balance may exceed maximum until December 31, 2023
- Once maximum balance takes effect, no longer lose time at year end
- Plan to use your VPL to avoid hitting maximum balance
- Leave balances may not appear on paystubs
When will these changes happen?

Holidays and Recess Days

• 2 summer recess days, starting in 2024:

• 4 holidays have been added since 2021:
  Labor Day – MLK, Jr. Day – Memorial Day – Juneteenth

• No change to existing holidays or winter recess

• Discretionary day discontinued; use by year end, if not used July 3
When will these changes happen?

Alternative Days Off

• Used when required to work on a holiday or recess day
• Replaces floating holidays (a.k.a. “banked holidays”)
• Used in the same or next pay period, if possible
• If not possible, consult with HR
• “Bank/Banked” changed to “Alternate” in Kronos
When will these changes happen?

Salaried Staff Sick Leave

• Start 2024 with 80 hours
• Prorated for those who work less than 100% of full-time
• Prorated for those who started in 2023
• Accrual starts on January 1, 2024, pay period
• Accrue 3.33 hours each semimonthly pay period (24 pay periods)
• Limited to using 80 hours in a calendar year period (subject to prorating)
• Use only when not working
• Per NYS law, all unused leave carries over and continues accruing
• Leave balances may not appear on paystubs
When will these changes happen?

**Bereavement/Trauma Leave (BTL)**

- Available immediately
- “Bereavement-Trauma Leave” in Kronos
What else should you know?

Resources
• Updated time away from work benefits webpage
• Updated Employee Handbook
• 2024 and 2025 holiday and recess calendar
• Your supervisor and the HR team

Reminders
• Sick leave can be used for health-related appointments
• Accommodating religious holidays and observances
• Accommodating personal appointments
• Make plans to use vacation/personal leave and alternative days off

Anything else? Questions?
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