

# 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 balance 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:  
**Wed., July 3 (recess) – Thurs., July 4 (holiday) – Fri., July 5 (recess)**
- 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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