

NAVIGATING THE COVID-19 CRISIS AS A CHURCH EMPLOYER

The following is a VERY condensed overview of some of the latest information regarding employment issues related to COVID-19. **See the [GNW Employment Resources for COVID-19 guide for details on all of these items and more.](#)** And, as always, we recommend that you contact an attorney or qualified financial advisor for professional advice.

WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE TO US TO KEEP OUR STAFF ON THE PAYROLL?

- 1. Loans for up to 2.5 x your average monthly payroll expenses which may be forgiven.**
The Paycheck Protection Program will offer Small Business loans through local banks. (See details for how to apply, restrictions on the use of funds and how to qualify for forgiveness.)
- 2. Employee Retention credits for up to \$5,000 per employee**
If you do **not** receive a PPP loan, you may be eligible for reimbursement of 50% of the first \$10,000 in payroll expenses (including Health Insurance) per employee incurred from March 13 – December 31, 2020 through a Payroll Tax Credit.
- 3. Tax deferments**
Social Security tax payments may be deferred until the end of the year and beyond.
- 4. Charitable Donation Incentives**
Donors will be able to deduct \$300 “off the top” for charitable donations on their income taxes in 2020. Most will also receive the \$1,200 per person incentive payments.

WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE TO OUR STAFF IF WE CANNOT AFFORD TO RETAIN THEM?

- 1. Unemployment Insurance**
If you must lay-off, furlough or reduce employee hours, encourage your employees to apply for unemployment benefits with the state as soon as possible.

State requirements vary, but most are expanding eligibility and providing much more generous benefits even to those who would not normally be eligible.

**Be sure to give your employees a letter documenting the reason for the change. They may need this when applying for benefits See the Furlough Letter template on the Resource Guide.*
- 2. Stimulus Payments**
The \$1,200 per adult, \$600 per child Federal Stimulus payments are intended to assist those suffering financially because of COVID-19.
- 3. Health Insurance**
Employees on Health Flex can remain on continuation coverage for up to one year – payable by the employee. They may, though, find better rates and qualify for substantial subsidies through the public Exchange

WHAT NEW RESPONSIBILITIES DO WE HAVE FOR OUR EMPLOYEES?

1. New rules for Sick Leave and Family Leave

Your employees may be eligible for up to 2 weeks of paid sick leave and up to 12 weeks of paid family medical leave in addition to whatever benefits the church already offers.

This leave would be paid to the employee by the church and reimbursed by the Federal Government through Payroll Tax credits.

2. Provide support for remote work, and social distancing.

WHAT ELSE?

1. UMCOR Emergency Grants

The conference is investigating potential grants from UMCOR to assist churches.

2. Consider temporary salary decreases or reduced work hours

Under the new Unemployment insurance provisions, they may qualify for benefits to offset the decrease.

3. Consider changes to duties

If you have funding for employees, but their current duties are not required during this period, consider expanding their duties to include member or community outreach

NEW VOCABULARY (See the GNW Employment Resources for COVID-19 Guide for details)

- 1. FFCRA** – Families First Coronavirus Response Act
- 2. EPSL** – Emergency Paid Sick Leave
- 3. EFMLA** – Expanded Family Medical Leave Act
- 4. CARES** – Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act
- 5. PPC** – Paycheck Protection Program
- 6. PUA** – Pandemic Unemployment Assistance