



OFFICE OF PERSONNEL & LABOR RELATIONS

CITY OF SYRACUSE, MAYOR BEN WALSH

Memorandum

TO: Department Heads
FROM: Donna D. Briscoe, Interim Director Personnel
DATE: June 11, 2020
RE: COVID-19 Leave Without Pay

COVID-19 Leave Without Pay (LWOP) Proposal – Round 2

June 15, 2020 through July 31, 2020

Overview

The City continues to experience revenue uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly with respect to State Aid and Sales Tax. At the same time, the Federal Government additions to State Unemployment Insurance continue: a \$600 per week automatic extended benefit (scheduled to end July 31, 2020) and a 50% subsidy to employers (like the City) who reimburse unemployment costs (scheduled to end December 31, 2020.)

The objective is to identify 50 additional employees (beyond the 104 on LWOP Round 1) who will be financially unharmed under the expanded UI program while providing salary savings to the City. The City will also officially extend Round 1 through July 31, 2020.

Eligibility

Any City employee may apply for Voluntary LWOP. Note that participation is subject to finalization of agreements with labor unions, approval by the appropriate Commissioner or Department Head, and acceptance by the Mayor or his designee. While approval and acceptance will not be unreasonably withheld, the City retains sole discretion to ensure that critical functions and services can be staffed and/or reassigned.

Unemployment Insurance

The City will assist employees who are approved for Voluntary LWOP with NYS Unemployment Insurance (NYS-UI) claims by providing any required documentation. While the City believes these employees will be eligible for both NYS-UI and the expanded Federal add-on benefits, that decision is reserved solely to the NYS Department of Labor.

Benefits

As ongoing employees on temporary LWOP, participants will remain eligible for Health Insurance benefits. At present, the City is allowing employees on LWOP to pay the same premium as active employees. This allowance is not guaranteed and may be changed to the City's LWOP premium rate at any time. All other benefits and accruals, including retirement credits, are suspended during LWOP.

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