

COVID-19 Cost Saving Measures Frequently Asked Questions

This FAQ is specifically designed to address non-represented employees. The same strategies are being discussed with our labor partners for implementation to represented employees. This is a live document that will be updated as decisions are made, and agreements are in place with our labor partners.

- Merit freezes are effective April 11, 2020.
- Pay action freezes are effective April 11 – June 30, 2020.
- Furlough period is April 30 – October 14, 2020. You may notice the end date has changed. This is to ensure the requirement is tied to the end of a pay period.

1. What does it mean “effective July 1, 2020, no cost of living (COLA) raises will be awarded to non-represented employees until further notice”?

Given the current economic impacts due to COVID-19 and the City’s efforts of cost saving measures, the COLA normally applied to non-represented employees’ salaries on July 1st that have occurred in the past will not be occurring this July.

2. When can I expect to get the next COLA?

At this time, it is unknown when and how COLA will be impacted in the future. The City will assess the financial impacts in the future and decisions will be made then.

3. My anniversary date is April 10, will I receive my merit increase?

Yes, your anniversary date falls prior to the implementation of the merit freeze (April 11, 2020 through June 30, 2021).

4. What if my manager has not yet completed my performance evaluation and submitted for my merit increase, will I still get it with an anniversary date of April 10?

Yes, if your anniversary date is April 10 or prior, you will receive your merit increase.

5. My anniversary date is April 11 or later, will I receive my merit increase?

No, your anniversary date falls on the merit freeze implementation date of April 11.

6. Will I receive my merit increase on my next anniversary date?

You should not expect to receive your merit increase in fiscal year July 1, 2020-June 30, 2021.

7. As I did not receive my merit increase in fiscal year 2019-2020 or 2020-2021, will my merit be retroactive?

At this point, no decision has been made regarding retroactivity related to merit increases. The City will assess and determine if it can process those awards later. Decisions would be prioritized to ensure those employees impacted between April 11 and June 30 of 2019 will be looked at first.

8. Are there freezes on other pay actions (pay changes, special assignment pay, work out of class, etc.)?

Yes, effective April 11, 2020, BHR will hold any actions related to pay changes which include movement on the range, special assignment pay, work out of class, and the previously

mentioned merit increases per the Mayor's directive. Classification and reclassification requests resulting in pay actions are also suspended. These are effective between April 11 – June 30, 2020.

9. What is a furlough?

Furlough is a temporary unpaid leave. This type of action can be taken by employers to address financial and economic impacts of the organization. This furlough is warranted due to the impacts of COVID-19 on the economy. The City is implementing 10 days of furlough, unpaid leave, to non-represented employees between April 30 – October 14, 2020. You may notice the end date has changed. This is to ensure the requirement is tied to the end of a pay period. The same strategies are being discussed with our labor partners for implementation to represented employees.

10. Why has the City chosen to do furloughs and not layoffs?

The City is asking all employees to make sacrifices to help address the anticipated financial shortfall and trying to minimize the impacts to both employees and city services. The City is committed to saving jobs and restoring our financial well-being as quickly as possible. Furloughs allow employees to maintain their benefits which is critical in this situation. With layoffs, benefits are lost. Also, while some layoffs are temporary and employees can be recalled to their job, layoffs can also become permanent which has a greater negative impact on employees.

11. How long will the furlough last?

The furlough period is from April 30 – October 14, 2020. Based on the state of the budget, the need for the continuation of furloughs will be evaluated during the Fall Budget Monitoring Process (BMP). You may notice the end date has changed. This is to ensure the requirement is tied to the end of a pay period.

12. Is there a timeline to complete the furlough?

Furloughs are to be implemented and completed between April 30 – October 14, 2020. Some have asked if the furlough can start earlier, it can, but please work with your manager or supervisor on impacts to your work and timing. You may notice the end date has changed. This is to ensure the requirement is tied to the end of a pay period.

13. What are my options in how I take the furlough?

Your bureau will decide on the best way to implement the furlough based on operations. Furloughs can be one day per pay period, two days per pay period or one week at a time. Your bureau will provide more information on how it will be implemented.

14. What options will bureaus have to manage and implement furloughs?

Bureaus have the flexibility to implement furloughs based on their operational needs. Bureaus should work with their HR Business Partner (HRBP) to determine the best way to implement and track how they proceed with furloughs.

15. Can bureaus take different approaches for different teams within the bureau?

Yes, if that is what works best for the operation and the employees.

16. Can a manager deny a request for a furlough on a specific day?

Yes, based on operational needs. Another day should be suggested that meets the operational needs while also considering the needs and financial impact on the employee.

17. Can I take a vacation day in lieu of a furlough?

No, the intent of the furlough is as a cost saving measure, taking a vacation day provides no cost savings to the City.

18. How will furloughs be tracked?

Bureaus will need to develop a process for managing scheduled furloughs. An SAP time code will be set up to allow for bureau entry and tracking of furlough time. Further instructions on the code and the standard SAP reports to use to report on furlough time will be provided once the time type has been created.

19. What if an employee does not schedule or take their furlough?

The responsibility lies with each bureau to ensure the tracking of and scheduling of furloughs between the designated periods (April 30-October 14, 2020). We are in this together and all need to play our part.

20. What type of follow up will there be if a bureau/employee does not take their allotted furlough days?

Bureaus will be expected to report out on their progress toward the furlough goals. A time report will be generated by BHR which provides a breakdown by bureau of scheduled hours and furlough hours taken for City leadership review.

21. Is there a timekeeping code for timesheets when an employee is on a furlough day/week?

An SAP time code will be set up to allow for bureau entry and tracking of furlough time. Further instructions on the code and the standard SAP reports to use to report on furlough time will be provided once the time type has been created.

22. I am a part-time employee, am I also required to participate in the furlough?

Yes, there will be some prorated responsibility, more to come on that. The City is committed to ensuring employee benefits are maintained during the furlough period, therefore, there will be no impact to your benefits.

23. I am currently a represented employee temporarily appointed to a non-represented position or working out of class, how am I impacted?

You are still considered a represented employee and would follow the impacts on represented employees once an agreement is in place with our labor partners.

24. How will my benefits be impacted during the furlough?

The City is committed to ensuring employees maintain their benefits during the furlough, therefore, there will be no impact to your benefits based upon your reduced work hours.

25. I am currently part-time, how will taking another day affect my premium shares?

As the furlough is not a change to standard hours, there would be no increase to benefit deductions.

26. I do not work an 8-hour per day shifts. How will furlough days be applied to me?

The furlough hours are equivalent to a total of 80 hours. Bureaus will have the flexibility on how they apply furlough days/hours to the different employee schedules. For example, a bureau can convert schedules to 8-hour days during the furlough period so that the employee is furloughing for 8 hours in a pay period versus 10 or 12 hours. For individuals who work 4/10's it would require 8 furlough days, matching the 80-hour equivalent.

27. How will taking furloughs impact my last three years for PERS calculation?

PERS calculation is based on the highest three years of earnings, it is best to contact PERS to determine the impacts specific to you.

28. Are there different considerations for the lowest waged employees?

Different strategies are being considered. More to come on that as strategies are developed.

29. Can I take extra furlough days and donate it to someone else?

Different strategies are being considered. More to come on that as strategies are developed.