

# BHR BULLETIN

Wednesday, January 20, 2021

**A weekly update from the Bureau of Human Resources.**

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**Today's Presidential Inauguration poem, "The Hill We Climb" reads, in part:**

*"For there is always light if only we're brave enough to see it,  
If only we're brave enough, to be it."*

**--Amanda Gorman**

## **Benefits**

### **FFCRA and FMLA/OFLA Protections**

*(New-ish Info)* As previously communicated, City Council recently adopted two ordinances meant to provide ongoing stability to you and your loved ones impacted by the coronavirus pandemic.

Ordinance #1009-1 allowed the Chief Human Resources Officer to create a one-year change

exception to HRAR 6.05 Family Medical Leave. For leave taken in calendar year 2021, employees will still need to meet the length of service requirements to be eligible for Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and/or Oregon Family Leave Act (OFLA) protected leave, but the City is waiving the “actual hours worked” lookback requirement for all City employees (including casual, seasonal, and temporary employees).

To be eligible for OFLA qualifying reasons, an employee will only need to have been employed with the City for at least 180 consecutive calendar days immediately preceding the start of their leave. For FMLA qualifying reasons, an employee must only have been employed with the City for 12 months preceding the start of their leave.

If you would like more information about applying for FMLA or OFLA leave protection, please talk to your bureau’s [FMLA Coordinator](#).

Ordinance 1009-2 provides City employees an extension of protections and benefits under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA). While the required federal FFCRA paid leave entitlement ended on December 31, 2020, the City is voluntarily extending FFCRA-like protections and benefits based on the federal FFCRA framework through February 28, 2021.

The Ordinance does not provide new entitlement to employees who have already accessed FFCRA paid leave benefits in 2020, but rather extends the eligibility period for those who have not already exhausted their qualifying paid leave entitlement. Essentially, an employee may “carryover” any remaining unused Emergency Paid Sick Leave and/or Expanded FMLA leave entitlement from 2020 to use for a FFCRA qualifying reason between January 1 through February 28, 2021.

If you’re interested, you will need to submit a new [FFCRA Application](#) to your bureau’s FMLA Coordinator for approval processing before any remaining “carryover” paid leave can be used.

An updated City FFCRA FAQ can be found at: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bhr/80750>.

***(New-ish Info)*** The federal COVID-19 legislation approved in late December allows you to make temporary changes to flexible spending accounts. The City is offering the following:

- Carryover unused flexible spending account balances up to the full annual elected amount from the 2019-20 year to the 2020-21 plan year (previously limited to \$500 maximum for Healthcare and \$0 for Dependent Care).
- Temporarily extending the maximum age of eligible dependents from “under 13” to “under 14” for Dependent Care FSAs.
- Employees can make certain prospective changes in Health and Dependent Care FSA election amounts for plan year 2020-21.

HealthEquity (formerly WageWorks) has not updated member accounts with this new information yet, but is acting quickly on behalf of the City. Questions and assistance can be directed to the Benefits Office at [benefits@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:benefits@portlandoregon.gov).

## **Health and Well-being Webinars**

[For all – On Demand](#)

[Managers/Supervisors – On Demand](#)

[Access previous Cascade Centers and Moda Health webinars.](#)

For detailed descriptions and registration information, please visit the [Benefits Webinar page](#)

## **COVID-19**

For more information regarding **Guidance, Testing, Temporary Leave, Leave Sharing**, and the **Safety Net Program**, please go to this [COVID-19 Update page](#).

### **COVID-19 Vaccinations**

**(New Info)** As we begin 2021, there is light at the end of the pandemic tunnel: Two COVID-19 vaccines are FDA-approved. This week we answer questions about vaccine safety and possible side effects. We will keep you informed on a weekly basis, right here, regarding the City's vaccination planning -- which is underway. If you have questions, please submit them to [Joel.Michels@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:Joel.Michels@portlandoregon.gov). Answers will be provided in the following week's BHR Bulletin and a [compiled list is posted here](#).

The information provided is taken from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) and Oregon Health Authority ([OHA](#)) resources with input from our own Joel Michels, Nurse Practitioner, Occupational Health and Well-being Program Manager. Please see below.

**Q:** What are the most common side effects?

**A:** Pain and swelling at the injection site are the most common. Fatigue, headache, fever, and chills are also possible and indicate that your immune system is responding to the vaccine and creating antibodies to the virus as expected. These usually last 1-3 days and can be managed by taking over-the-counter analgesic medications as directed by your healthcare provider, using or exercising your arm, staying hydrated, and resting.

**Q:** If I already had COVID-19, do I still need the vaccine?

**A:** Yes. Due to the severe health risks associated with COVID-19 and the fact that reinfection is possible, the CDC advises being vaccinated regardless of whether you already had COVID-19 infection.

**Q:** What about people who have allergic reactions to vaccines or to other things like penicillin or bee stings?

**A:** If you have had an immediate allergic reaction—even if it was not severe—to a vaccine or injectable therapy for another disease, **ask your doctor if you should get a COVID-19 vaccine.** Your doctor will help you decide if it is safe for you to get vaccinated.

The CDC recommends that people with a history of severe allergic reactions not related to vaccines or injectable medications—such as food, pets, venom, environmental, or latex allergies—get vaccinated. People with a history of allergies to oral medications or a family history of severe allergic reactions may also get vaccinated.

If you have had an immediate allergic reaction—even if it was not severe—to any ingredient in an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, **CDC recommends that you should not get either of the currently available mRNA COVID-19 vaccines.** If you had an immediate allergic reaction after getting the first dose of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine, **you should not get the second dose.** Your doctor may refer you to a specialist in allergies and immunology to provide more care or advice.

**Q:** What are the vaccine ingredients?

**A:** The two COVID-19 vaccines currently available in the United States do **not** contain eggs, preservatives, or latex. For a full list of ingredients, please see each vaccine’s Fact Sheet for Recipients and Caregivers:

- [Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine](#)
- [Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#)

People who are allergic to any of the ingredients including polyethylene glycol (PEG) or polysorbate should not get an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine. These recommendations include allergic reactions to PEG and polysorbate. Polysorbate is not an ingredient in either mRNA COVID-19 vaccine but is closely related to PEG, which is in the vaccines.

**Q:** Can I get the vaccine if I’m pregnant or breastfeeding?

**A:** While no data are available yet on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines during pregnancy, people who are pregnant and part of a [group recommended](#) to receive the COVID-19 vaccine may choose to be vaccinated. Talk with your healthcare provider to help make an informed decision.

No data are available yet on the safety of COVID-19 vaccines in lactating women or on the effects of mRNA vaccines on breastfed infants or on milk production/excretion. mRNA vaccines are not thought to be a risk to breastfeeding infants. People who are breastfeeding and are part of a [group recommended](#) to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, such as healthcare personnel, may choose to be vaccinated.

To make sure that more information is gathered regarding the safety of these vaccines when administered during pregnancy, pregnant people are encouraged to enroll in [v-safe](#), CDC's new smartphone-based tool being used to check-in on people's health after they receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

Next week we will answer more questions related to COVID-19 vaccinations. The intent of the information is to help you make an informed decision about vaccination. If you have questions, please send them to [Joel.Michels@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:Joel.Michels@portlandoregon.gov).

### **COVID-19 Workplace Health and Safety Training**

***(Deadline Tomorrow!)*** To support employee safety and comply with the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA's) [Temporary Rule](#), all City of Portland employees must complete a **required [COVID-19 Safety Guidance Training](#) by Thursday, Jan. 21, 2021.**

This training requirement for all city employees includes limited-term, seasonal/casual employees who are actively and currently working for the City, and interns. Volunteers may be offered the opportunity to participate in the training, but are not required to take it.

To access the training, visit [CityLearner](#) (a remote access token is not required). Select the "COVID-19 Workplace Health and Safety" tile or select the class in the "Take Courses" tile.

### **COVID-19 Staff Safety and Workplace Illness Resources**

For employees continuing to report to work on-site, please remember to take these safety precautions:

- Wear your face covering.
- Stay six feet apart.
- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds.
- Don't come to work if you're sick.

If you believe guidelines are not being followed in your workplace, you may remove yourself from the situation and contact your supervisor/manager, your bureau's Human Resources Business Partner, or your bureau's Safety Officer for resolution.

[The City's COVID-19 Response page is available here.](#)

### **2021 W-4 Elections**

### **Exemption from Withholding for 2021**

Employees who have been claiming “exempt” withholding status are required each year to submit a new Form W-4. Forms for the coming year must be provided in *hard copy* to Payroll Services **no later than February 15, 2021**. Failure to submit a new Form W-4 by this date will result in a default withholding status of “*single*” without any additional adjustment for calendar year 2021.

### **Review Current Form W-4 for 2021**

Employees should also use this opportunity to review and update marital status and number of withholding allowances for the coming year. Form W-4 can be updated online (using Internet Explorer only) by accessing the Employee Self Service page on the SAP CityLink Portal and navigating to “My Tax Withholding (W-4)” under the Compensation tab. Alternatively, employees can still manually complete new forms and provide a *hard copy* directly to HR and Payroll Services. Please contact Rod Morales at 503-823-4377 or Steve Baron at 503-823-3149 regarding any questions or concerns.

**Note: (*New-ish Info*)** Currently, only Internet Explorer works with the SAP interface to change your W-4 withholding information.

## **Work Share**

### **- CARES Act Extension**

**(*New-ish Info*)** Our understanding of the CARES Act Extension recently passed by Congress is that employees who have a valid Work Share claim between Dec. 27, 2020 and March 13, 2021 will receive a supplemental weekly benefit of \$300, in addition to their Work Share benefit. Oregon Employment Department (OED) is working to get these new benefits to employees as soon as possible. Currently, OED is waiting to receive rules and instructions from the Department of Labor. Until that information is received, OED cannot give the City a date as to when supplemental benefit payments will be issued. The City will continue to send in weekly claim certifications to OED, and once everything is finalized, the additional payments will be reviewed and issued by OED.

### **- OED Letters Regarding Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)**

#### **- Waiting Week Payments**

#### **- OED Adjudication (Judgment) for Missed Opportunities to Work**

#### **- Lost Wages Assistance**

#### **- Processing**

#### **- ReliaCard**

[Detailed Work Share updates are available here.](#)

Read a comprehensive [FAQ regarding the Work Share program.](#)

If you have questions regarding Work Share benefits or the process, please email [Inboxworkshare@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:Inboxworkshare@portlandoregon.gov).

## **Bureau Assignments**

As you probably heard, Mayor Wheeler [recently updated City Commissioners' bureau and liaison assignments](#). -- sparking adjustments for many City employees. This information is updated in SAP. Please notify [inboxesapbhr@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:inboxesapbhr@portlandoregon.gov) if you experience any related questions and/or issues.

## **Racial Equity Support Line**

**503-575-3764**

This is a service led and staffed by people with lived experience of racism. We offer support to those feeling the emotional impacts of racist violence and microaggressions, as well as the emotional impacts of immigration struggles and other cross-cultural issues.

We get it. And we're here to talk. To support. To connect.

[More information is available here.](#)

## **Employee Care & Support Guide**

With you in mind, this [Employee Care & Support Guide](#) was created to provide stability during these uncertain times. Topics covered include: Families First Coronavirus Response Act, COVID-19 Leave Sharing Program, Dependent and Caregiver Resources, and the Safety Net Program.

## **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

[24-hour Help During Emergencies and Other Times of Need](#)

If you are in crisis, help is a confidential call away.

**Cascade/EAP:** 1-800-433-2320 (text) 503-850-7721

**National Suicide Hotline:** 1-800-273-8255 (website) <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>

### **EAP Webinars (New Info)**

#### ***Making Tax Returns Less Taxing***

In this class, we cover how income tax is calculated, types of adjustments/deductions, ways to reduce taxation and strategies to save. Information about tax law changes and common mistakes will also be included.

Tuesday, Feb. 9, 9 a.m. *OR* 12 p.m.

[Register here.](#)

#### ***Healthy Mind, Healthy Heart***

Recent studies show poor mental health is a risk factor for chronic physical conditions such as heart disease. In this webinar, you'll learn why anxiety and depression contribute to heart health risk factors, how to assess your mental stressors, and best practices to keep your mind sharp and your heart strong.

Wednesday, Feb. 10, 10 a.m.

[Register here.](#)

#### ***Relationships & Money***

Join us as we explain how life experiences and emotions influence our finances, and then outline best practices to increase our awareness and improve our communications with friends and family.

Thursday, Feb. 25, 9 a.m. *OR* 12 p.m.

[Register here.](#)

### **CityStrong Winter Sports Around the World**

**(New-ish Info)** *YOU'RE INVITED* -- to stay active, healthy, and have fun along the way! Join the CityStrong Winter Sports Around the World Movement Challenge taking place Jan. 25 through Feb. 21. This challenge sends you around the world to various winter wonderlands where you'll try a variety of snow activities without needing the skill of an Olympic athlete. Ski jump in Slovenia! Ice skate in Russia! You bring the hot cocoa and we'll bring the frosty fun.

Register at [citystrong.walkertracker.com](http://citystrong.walkertracker.com) to join the movement challenge today!

## **Recruiting**

[Current Internal Recruitments](#)

[Current External Recruitments](#)

[Current Lateral Transfer Opportunities](#)

## **Procurement Trainings**

Do you buy goods and services as part of your job for the City? Sign up for an upcoming procurement class to learn about rules, tools, resources and best practices that will ensure we're accountable to the public – and simplify your work. Whether you're a newcomer looking for an introductory lesson or a pro who wants specialized advice, we have a class for you. Learn more about [January through July classes](#).

## **Training (VIRTUAL)**

Be sure to visit [CityLearner](#) for course descriptions and the most current class details.

### ***Reasonable Employment Accommodations***

Wednesday, Jan. 27, 1 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.

### ***Working in Severe Weather Shelters (New-ish Info)***

To access the videos and log your training, follow these steps if you have access to [CityLearner](#):

1. Go to [CityLearner](#) (a remote access token is not required), select the Learning tile, then type Shelters into the "Find Learning" search field and click "Go" to locate the course.
2. Click the training link for the title **Working at Severe Weather Shelters (ELRN 3003)**.
3. Click the links to read the **FAQ**.
4. Click **Start Course**. **\*\* if you have completed ELRN 3003 in the past, due to the packet reading requirement, please retake the course.** You will need to click Assign to Me, then Click Start Course to retake\*\*
5. Click links to watch the two videos (**Working at Severe Weather Shelters:** <https://vimeo.com/304690714/d83c5b778a> and **Values and Guiding Principles:** <https://youtu.be/b3HvNe7iMqw> - Each is about 10 mins long).
6. Read the required 2020 Winter Weather Disaster Resource Center/Shelter Participant Packet (<https://multco.us/file/94069/download>). This is also linked on the County's

Disaster Resource Page: [Disaster Resource Centers | Multnomah County \(multco.us\)](#).

7. After viewing the videos as many times as needed to understand the content, go back to the CityLearner page.
8. Click **Return to Content Structure**.
9. **(IMPORTANT)** Click and complete the **Acknowledgement Form** which serves to certify training completion. If you need assistance with CityLearner, please send an email to [BHR Training](#).

If you do not have access to City Learner, email [hrtraining@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:hrtraining@portlandoregon.gov) after you have finished watching the videos and reading the 2020 Winter Weather Disaster Resource Center/Shelter Participant Packet to get your training logged manually.

### **Required, All Employees**

#### **COVID-19 Workplace Health and Safety**

**(Deadline Tomorrow!)** To support employee safety and comply with the Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Administration OSHA's [Temporary Rule](#), all **City of Portland employees** must complete a required [COVID-19 Safety Guidance Training](#) by **Thursday, Jan. 21, 2021**.

#### ***HR 2.02, Workforce Harassment & Discrimination Prevention for Non-Supervisory Employees***

Tuesday, Jan. 21, 9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

#### ***(New-ish Info) Workplace Harassment, Discrimination, & Retaliation Prevention (HR 2.02)***

##### ***Refresher: Non-supervisory version***

Wednesday, Jan. 27, 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.

#### ***Racial Equity 101***

Wednesday, Jan. 20, 8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.

### **Professional Development**

#### ***How to Apply***

Looking for a new job within the City of Portland? Course participants will refresh their knowledge regarding City of Portland's online application process, types of employment, submitting application materials, and interviewing.

Wednesday, Jan. 20, 12 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Wednesday, Feb. 17, 12 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

Wednesday, March 17, 12 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.

#### ***Introduction to Procurement***

Introduction to Procurement is a 2-hour introductory course explaining the fundamental of public procurement at the City of Portland. This course is recommended before taking other courses in the curriculum.

Thursday, Jan. 21, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting +1 971-323-0035](#) Conference ID: 306 301 558

### ***Cooperative and City Agreements***

This course is intended to familiarize you with how Cooperative Agreements work, how to find one that fits your purchasing needs, and when to use them.

Wednesday, Jan. 27, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

[Join Microsoft Teams Meeting +1 971-323-0035](#) United States, Portland (Toll) Conference ID: 355 477 073

To view a complete list of Procurement classes, click - [Procurement Trainings](#)

To register, go to [CityLearner](#) (using Internet Explorer or Chrome; a remote access token is not needed), select "Learning," type the course name into the "Find Learning" search field, then click "Go" to locate the course. Register for the date and time that work for your schedule. If you need assistance with CityLearner, please go to [CityLearner Help](#), or send an email to [BHR Training](#). Upon successful registration in CityLearner, a Zoom meeting invitation, training instructions, and materials will be sent two to three business days before the class date.

If you have questions about the listed trainings, or any others, please send a message to [hrtraining@portlandoregon.gov](mailto:hrtraining@portlandoregon.gov).

### **Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) Education Sessions -- Now Available Online**

Though their offices are currently closed, PERS staff remain available to answer questions during regular business hours via phone (888-320-7377) and [email](#). PERS is also offering virtual education sessions for members who are at any point in their careers.

For detailed descriptions and registration information, please visit the [Benefits Webinar page](#).

***Thank You!***



## **BHR Communications**

City of Portland, OMF Bureau of Human Resources

Ph: 503.823.3572 | Fax: 503.865.3288

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#)

### **City of Portland Core Values:**

**Anti-racism | Equity | Transparency | Communication | Collaboration | Fiscal Responsibility**

[core competency model](#) — [core competency accessible document](#)

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