



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### WORKER AND FAMILIES FIRST PAID SICK LEAVE PROGRAM

**Q: When does the program go into effect?**

A: The program will cover any sick leave an employee has taken since March 16th. Eligible employers are encouraged to maintain and prepare documentation for the application process.

**Q: Can employers combine benefits under the Worker and Families First program with their existing Paid Time-Off (PTO) plan?**

A: If a business combines sick leave with other leave benefits into one Paid Time-Off plan, it should first use existing PTO in the amount equivalent to the hours of paid sick leave employees were entitled to accrue under the San Francisco Paid Sick Leave Ordinance prior to seeking reimbursement for additional paid sick leave through this program.

In addition to exhausting their existing sick leave policies, for reimbursement sought for hours on April 2 or later, employers between 200 and 499 employees would additionally need to exhaust the additional 80 hours of paid sick leave required by the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(HR 6201\)](#).

Employers would need to exhaust their existing sick leave policies as well as applicable state or federal sick leave mandates and/or programs related to COVID-19 before accessing additional sick leave through this program. For more information on OLSE guidance, you may visit: [www.sfgov.org/olse](http://www.sfgov.org/olse)

**Q: Are businesses required to participate in this program?**

A; This program is being made available to support you and your employees during this pandemic and is voluntary.

**Q: How long is the program available for?**

A: The program is available until all funds are exhausted or when there is no need for a subsidized extended sick leave program related to COVID-19.

**Q: How will businesses be paid?**

A: Employers who apply and are approved will be directly reimbursed by the City.

**Q: What circumstances would allow employees to qualify for extended sick pay?**

A: Conditions that meet the guidance around paid sick leave is issued by the San Francisco Office of Labor Standards Enforcement (OLSE), for more information, please visit: [www.sfgov.org/olse](http://www.sfgov.org/olse)



**Q: What businesses and employees are eligible?**

A: All San Francisco employers with Full or Part-time employees who conduct work in San Francisco (i.e. remote employees are not eligible) are eligible for the program.

**Q: If employers have a concurrent emergency sick pay plan, can they still apply?**

A: Employers with sick paid plans can only apply when any existing sick paid plan is exhausted.

**Q: Is there a deadline for submitting reimbursement?**

A: Reimbursement requests must be submitted 90 days after getting approved for funding.

**Q: Can I submit reimbursement request on a rolling basis during the 90-day reimbursement period?**

A: Employers may request reimbursements on a rolling basis.

**Q: How long will reimbursement take?**

A: Employers may expect to be reimbursed within 2-3 weeks from the application approval.

**Q: What is the maximum number of hours the program will pay sick leave for?**

A: The program only pays for an additional week of sick leave based on the average number of weekly hours an employee works, up to 40.

**Q: How much will the City subsidize through the program?**

A: The City will contribute up to 40 hours at \$15.59 per hour (minimum wage) per employee, or \$623 per employee. Employers are required to pay the remaining cost if the employee's wage is above \$15.59. Employees with under 50 employees are only required to pay up to \$30/hour.

**Q: How are the applications processed?**

A: Program funding is available on a first come, first served basis. Applications will be processed based in the order they are received.

**Q. How many employees could be covered under this program?**

A: The program is expected to support over 16,000 additional weeks of sick leave pay and providing coverage for up to 25,000 San Francisco employees.

**Q: Are self-employed residents eligible?**

A: This program only pays for employees; however, the federal relief package, [Families First Coronavirus Response Act \(HR 6201\)](#), includes tax credits built in for self-employed to pay themselves for sick leave.

**Q: Does participation in this program only apply to businesses that are closed? What about businesses with reduced hours?**

A: The additional sick leave pay is eligible to any employer who extend an additional week of paid sick leave to one or more employees, after they have exhausted their own policies as well



as any applicable state or federal polices or programs. Whether the business is still operating, operating on reduced hours, or temporarily closed is not a factor in determining eligibility.

**Q: Does the program require businesses to continue to pay sick pay after the City's reimbursement?**

A: The City does not require the employer to continue to pay sick leave after the week that is made available through this program. However, it does require the employer to pay out all sick leave time the employee has accrued and use state or federal sick leave programs that may apply to them before applying for the City's Workers and Families First program.

**Q: How does this program work with unemployment benefits?**

A: This program allows employers to pay for an additional week of sick leave for employees that are employed. Unemployment benefits apply to employees whom have been laid off, even if only temporarily.

**Q. Do I have to cover all of my employees with this program or can I choose to cover only some employees?**

A: The number of employees the employer chooses to seek reimbursement for is at the discretion of the business.

**Q. My business doesn't have an official sick leave policy, we only follow the guidance from the Office of Labor Standards Enforcement (OLSE). What should we attach in our application as our sick leave policy?**

A: The program will accept a printout of the OLSE paid sick leave policy as your business sick leave policy.

**Q. How do I "count" the total number of employees in my business?**

A: The Department of Labor has issued guidance for employees. Please visit their webpage [here](#).

Updated: March 30, 2020

