

## Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time for Non-Benefits Eligible Staff & Student Employees

**Effective Date: July 1, 2024**

Northwestern provides Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time to non-benefits eligible staff and student employees. This program covers non-benefits eligible staff employees including temporary staff, temporary student employees (including college work study), part-time staff who work less than 18.75 hours per week, and graduate student employees not otherwise covered by the terms of a collective bargaining agreement.

Benefits-eligible staff members should refer to the [Staff Handbook](#) for information about time-off programs available to them. Faculty members should refer to the [Faculty Handbook or the Office of the Provost](#) to learn about time-off programs for faculty.

### **Overview of Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time**

For every 35 hours worked, non-benefits eligible staff employees and student employees earn the following: (1) one hour of Paid Leave; and (2) one hour of Paid Sick Time. Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time are earned in full hour increments up to a maximum of 40 hours for each leave type per fiscal year (September 1 – August 31).

### **Tracking Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time**

Employees can view their accruals as they are earned in the [Workforce Timekeeping](#) system under the “Time Off” tab.

It is the employee’s responsibility to accurately enter time worked and Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time taken into the Workforce Timekeeping system. It is the supervisor’s responsibility to verify accuracy and approve each biweekly timesheet accordingly.

Employees may only use Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time for time that they are scheduled to work. If an employee is not scheduled to work due to a school/unit closure, University holiday, or any other reason, Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time cannot be applied.

### **Paid Leave Details**

Earned Paid Leave hours may be used for any reason of the employee’s choosing. Employees are expected to provide reasonable advance notice to their supervisor and to follow departmental procedures for scheduling Paid Leave. Employees are not required to provide a reason or documentation as proof or in support of the use of Paid Leave.

The maximum Paid Leave accrual cap per fiscal year is 40 hours. If an employee has accrued 40 hours of Paid Leave in a fiscal year, they will not accrue additional leave time until they use some of their Paid Leave. Employees should work with their supervisors to ensure Paid Leave is scheduled and utilized.

Employees may carry over up to the maximum of 40 hours of unused Paid Leave each fiscal year. Paid Leave hours in excess of 40 hours will be forfeited if they are not used by August 31.

Unused Paid Leave hours will be paid out if an employee fully terminates from their position. If an employee holds multiple positions, the payout will not occur until all their active positions have been terminated. The payout will be calculated based on the payrate for the last active position held by the employee. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to review the final timecard to verify that all time was entered accurately by the employee.

## **Paid Sick Time Details**

Earned Paid Sick Time hours may be used for absences due to personal illness or injury, or to receive professional care, including preventive care, diagnosis, or treatment for medical, mental, or behavioral issues, including substance use disorders, or when a family member is ill or injured or to care for a family member receiving professional care, including preventive care, diagnosis, or treatment for medical, mental, or behavioral issues, including substance use disorders, or if the employee or employee's family member are victims of domestic violence. In addition, earned Paid Sick Time hours may be used when an employee or the employee's family member is ordered to quarantine, the employee is obeying a stay-home or isolation order related to communicable disease, or the employee's workplace or the school or place of care of the family member for whom the employee must care is closed due to a public health emergency.

Qualifying family members are defined as a child, legal guardian or ward, adopted child, stepchild, godchild, foster child, spouse, domestic partner, co-parent, parent, spouse or domestic partner's parent, stepparent, adoptive parent, godparent, legal guardian, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or any other individual related by blood or whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship.

When possible, employees are expected to provide reasonable advance notice to their supervisor when scheduling the use of Paid Sick Time. If advance notice is not possible, employees should notify their supervisor before the start of their shift and follow departmental procedures for calling out sick.

At the end of each fiscal year, employees may carry over up to 80 hours of Paid Sick Time into the next fiscal year. Paid Sick Time in excess of 80 hours will be forfeited if not used by August 31.

Unused Paid Sick Time is not paid out following the employee's termination or resignation.

In certain cases, Northwestern University may require documentation for visits to licensed certified caregivers for treatment or checkups, but only when the employee is absent for (3) three or more days. Supervisors may not require that the documentation specify the nature of the injury, illness, or condition. Supervisors cannot deny Paid Sick Time or delay wages due to not yet receiving documentation.

## **Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time FAQs**

### **1. Who is eligible to accrue Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time?**

This program applies to non-benefits eligible staff and student employees, including:

- Part-time staff who are scheduled to work less than 18.75 hours per week.
- Temporary staff.
- Temporary student employees (including college work study students).
- Non-bargaining unit eligible graduate students working in positions not related to their studies.

## 2. How do employees accrue Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time?

At the start of the biweekly pay period that begins June 23, 2024, eligible employees will accrue time off at a rate of one hour of Paid Leave and one hour of Paid Sick Time for every 35 hours worked up to the maximum of 40 hours of each in each fiscal year (September 1 – August 31).

## 3. When do employees begin accruing Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time? When can they begin using the time?

Employees begin accruing under this program as soon as they begin working in a non-benefits eligible position. There is no waiting period before employees may utilize the time.

## 4. Is accrued Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time carried over each fiscal year (September 1 – August 31)?

Yes, up to the maximum amount eligible to be carried over for each leave type. Employees may carry over up to 40 hours of unused Paid Leave and up to 80 hours of unused Paid Sick Time. *Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time hours that exceed the maximum carryover will be forfeited if not used by August 31, 2025, and each August 31<sup>st</sup> thereafter. No Paid Leave or Paid Sick Time accrued under this program will be forfeited for any employee on August 31, 2024.*

## 5. How will accrued Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time be viewed and recorded?

Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time accruals are viewable in [Workforce Timekeeping System](#) under the “Time Off” tab. Employees are responsible for logging Paid Sick Time as “Sick” and Paid Leave as “Paid Leave.” It is the supervisor’s responsibility to review and approve timecards accordingly.

## 6. If an employee already has accrued Paid Sick Time under the previous Paid Sick Leave Requirement, what will happen to that time?

All accrued, unused sick leave will be carried over as Paid Sick Time. Employees will continue to accrue up to the maximum of 40 hours per fiscal year.

## 7. Do Paid Sick Time or Paid Leave hours taken during the week count towards overtime?

No. Only hours worked count toward overtime in each week. Also, Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time are paid at the employee’s base rate for the job for which they are using the time—they are not paid at the overtime rate or any other premium rates.

## 8. Can an employee take Paid Leave or Paid Sick Time off in partial hourly increments, such as 1.5 hours of time?

Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time may be taken in whole hour or partial hour increments.

## 9. Do unused Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time get paid out when employment with Northwestern is terminated?

Unused Paid Sick Time is not paid out upon termination.

Unused Paid Leave will be paid out on the next regular pay date following their termination date if an employee fully terminates from their position(s). Employees who hold multiple appointments will not be paid out until all their appointments have ended. They will be paid out at the rate of the last appointment from which they were terminated.

It is the responsibility of the supervisor and local school/unit administrator to ensure appointments are terminated in MyHR in a timely manner.

## **10. Under what circumstances may an individual use earned Paid Sick Time hours?**

Earned Paid Sick Time hours may be used for absences due to personal illness or injury, or to receive professional care, including preventive care, diagnosis, or treatment for medical, mental, or behavioral issues, including substance use disorders, or to care for a family member receiving professional care, including preventive care, diagnosis, or treatment for medical, mental, or behavioral issues, including substance use disorders, or if the employee or employee's family member are victims of domestic violence. In addition, earned Paid Sick Time hours may be used when an employee or the employee's family member is ordered to quarantine, the employee is obeying a stay-home or isolation order related to communicable disease, or the employee's workplace or the school or place of care of the family member for whom the employee must care is closed due to a public health emergency.

## **11. Who qualifies as a "Family Member" for the purposes of Paid Sick Time?**

"Family member" is defined broadly to include a child, legal guardian or ward, adopted child, stepchild, godchild, foster child, spouse, domestic partner, co-parent, parent, spouse or domestic partner's parent, stepparent, adoptive parent, godparent, legal guardian, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, or any other individual related by blood or whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship.

## **12. When do I need to notify my supervisor that I need to take Paid Sick Time?**

If you know in advance that you are going to use Paid Sick Time (such as for a scheduled doctor's appointment), provide your supervisor reasonable advance notice. If you need to use Paid Sick Time suddenly, follow your department's notification procedures.

## **13. Are any sick notes or documentation required if an individual uses Paid Sick Time?**

In certain cases, and only when there are more than three (3) consecutive workdays, supervisors may request that an employee obtain a note from a medical provider stating that the qualified individual was under a doctor's care for the time off. The note should not contain specific details about the injury or illness but should specify the dates of care to verify that the qualified individual was off of work due to injury or illness. The individual should send the doctor's note to Northwestern's Benefits Office via email at [benefits@northwestern.edu](mailto:benefits@northwestern.edu).

## **14. Can employees borrow Paid Sick Time or Paid Leave, or receive an advance of Paid Sick Time or Paid Leave, that has not yet been accrued?**

No, though if an employee needs more sick time than they have accrued Paid Sick Time hours, they may use accrued Paid Leave. However, if an employee is seeking to use more Paid Leave than they have available, they cannot use Paid Sick Time, unless the time off is needed for the Paid Sick Time eligible circumstances listed above. If both Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time accruals are depleted, the time away from work will not be compensated.

## **15. How do Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time work for a non-benefits eligible employee who holds multiple positions at Northwestern?**

A non-benefits eligible employee will earn Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time for hours worked. In cases where a student or staff member has multiple jobs and multiple pay rates, the employee will submit the Paid Sick Time or Paid Leave in the Workforce Timekeeping System for the job(s) they are scheduled to work on the day of the leave.

*For example, a student employee is scheduled to work at two jobs on Wednesday—two hours at Norris Center (which pays \$15/hour), and three hours at the University Library (which pays \$16/hour). The student employee is ill and cannot work either job on the scheduled workday, Wednesday. The student employee will enter two Paid Sick Time hours for the position at Norris, and three Paid Sick Time hours for the position at the University Library.*

*The student employee will be paid for a total of five Paid Sick Time hours. Two hours will be paid at an hourly rate of \$15/hour and three hours will be paid at \$16/hour.*

**16. Can an employee use accrued Paid Leave or Paid Sick Time to receive pay for days they are not scheduled to work, such as University holidays or Winter Recess?**

No. Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time can only be applied for time that the employee was scheduled to work. For example, if an employee regularly works on Mondays, but is not scheduled to work on Labor Day due to an office/school closure, they may not log Paid Leave time for the day.

**17. Will Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time hours be charged to college work-study funding?**

No, federal regulations do not allow Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time to be paid from federal work-study wages. Leave hours for federal work-study students will be charged to the department chart string that is a non-work study account.

**18. What happens to accrued Paid Leave and Paid Sick Time if an employee transfers into a benefits eligible position?**

If transferring to a benefits eligible staff position, the employee will receive the greater of the Paid Sick Time accrued as a non-benefits eligible employee or the lump sum of sick time granted to benefits eligible employees as of the date of the employee's transition to benefits eligible status. The staff member will retain earned Paid Leave time as vacation time, up to the maximum vacation accrual (one and on-half times the annual accrual rate for the benefits eligible staff position).

If transferring to a faculty role, the unused Paid Leave will be paid out upon transfer to faculty status. The Paid Sick Time will not be paid out.

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