

FAQs New Paid Sick Leave Requirement

General Questions

1. What is the new Paid Sick Leave Requirement?

Northwestern University provides paid time away from work as a form of income protection for non-benefits eligible staff members and student workers who are unable to work because of illness or injury.

2. Is Northwestern University required by law to provide sick leave for non-benefits eligible staff?

Yes. The Chicago and Cook County Paid Sick Ordinance, passed in July 2017, requires employers in Chicago and Cook County to provide qualified individuals at least one hour of paid sick leave for every 40 hours worked within a 120-day period (four months).

Eligibility

3. Who is eligible?

This requirement applies to non-benefits eligible staff and student workers including:

- Part-time Staff who are scheduled to work less than 18.75 hours
- Temporary Staff
- Graduate Students working in positions not related to their studies
- College Work Study Students

4. What are the eligibility requirements?

An individual must be non-benefits eligible and work at least 80 hours in any 120-day period (four months). The four months do not need to be consecutive.

5. Are adjunct faculty included in this requirement?

Adjunct faculty do not formally accrue sick time under this policy and should speak to their dean's office in the event that they need to miss class due to illness.

6. Are full-time staff covered by this requirement?

Full-time staff and staff working 18.75 hours or more are covered with paid sick time through the Incidental Sick Time (IST) and the Extended Sick Time (EST) programs.

Accruals

7. How do individuals accrue sick time?

Individuals will accrue at a rate no less than one hour for every 40 hours worked, up to a maximum of 40 hours (five workdays) per 12-month accrual period.

8. At the point of eligibility, does the individual automatically have two hours of sick time or do they need to work 120 hours to get to their first hour?

Once an individual works 80 hours in any 120-day period or four-month period, two hours of sick time are earned.

9. How will the University handle crediting sick time for individuals who have been working since July 1, 2017 and are still currently working?

Eligible individuals who worked at least 80 hours from July 1, 2017 through June 30, 2018, will have retroactive accruals added to their myHR time record on July 1, 2018 for that period of time.

10. Are eligible staff and student workers able to carryover unused, earned sick time?

Yes, half of the staff's and student worker's remaining unused, earned paid sick leave may be carried forward into the next year. That means up to 20 hours of non-FMLA covered paid sick leave may be carried over. Maximum annual use limits still apply.

11. What is the maximum amount of paid sick leave an individual may use in a fiscal year?

Qualifying individuals may use a maximum of 60 hours of paid sick leave in a calendar year. The 60 hours includes any time carried over from the previous calendar year and any time accrued during the current year.

12. What are the consequences for a qualifying individual who goes over their paid sick time?

If a qualifying individual uses more sick time than is available, the excess days will not be compensated.

13. Does sick time taken during the week count towards overtime?

No. Only regular hours worked count towards overtime in a given week.

14. Does an individual lose accrued sick time if they become benefits eligible?

No, an individual does not lose accrued sick time when the individual becomes benefits eligible. The individual will *receive the greater of the 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.*

15. What happens to the earned sick time if an individual quits but is rehired later in the same role or something similar?

If the individual is rehired within 120 days of the termination date, they will receive credit for the first 80 hours so that they begin accruing immediately.

16. If a staff member or student worker was employed after July 1, 2017, and had sick time but is no longer working for Northwestern University, does the staff member or student worker get credit for the sick leave?

No, a staff member or student worker must be currently employed to get credit for accrued sick time.

17. Does sick time get paid out when a staff member or student worker leaves Northwestern?

No.

Requesting and Using Sick Time

18. When can I take a paid sick day?

Paid sick time may be used when you or a family member is sick, for routine doctor's visits, when you or a family member is a victim of domestic or sexual violence or when schools or workplaces are closed by order of a public official due to a public health emergency.

19. If I am going to use a paid sick day, when do I need to notify my supervisor?

If you know in advance that you are going to use paid sick time (such as for a doctor's appointment) notify your supervisor in advance. Clarify with your supervisor how much advance notice is required for your respective department. If you need to take a paid sick day suddenly, follow your department's notification procedures.

20. What qualifies as "Family Member"?

"Family member" is defined broadly to include a child, legal guardian or ward, adopted child, stepchild, godchild, 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 "Covered Qualified Individual" is the equivalent of a family relationship.

21. Does the definition of "family" change with IST for current benefits eligible employees?

No, there is no change to the definition of "family" for the use of IST.

22. Are any sick notes or documentation required if an individual uses paid sick leave?

For absences of more than three (3) consecutive workdays, supervisors may request that staff 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 detail 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.

If the leave is related to domestic violence or a sex offense, the individual may certify with a police report, court document, or statement from an attorney, clergy member, victim advocate, the employee, or other person with knowledge of circumstances. The documents should be sent to Northwestern's Benefits Office via email at benefits@northwestern.edu

Tracking and Viewing Sick Time Accruals

23. How will the sick time be recorded and approved?

Paid sick time for non-benefits eligible staff and student workers will be housed in myHR. Individuals will request paid sick time hours in myHR through the Pay tile in Self-Service. Supervisors will receive and approve these requests in the Manager Self-Service section in myHR.

24. How will a person know how much sick time is accrued?

Non-benefits eligible staff and student workers who qualify for paid sick time can view sick time accruals in myHR under the Pay tile in Employee Self-Service. Supervisors may also view a student's or staff's paid sick time accruals and usage in myHR.

25. How will tracking work for staff and student workers who do not receive a NetID?

If a staff or student worker does not receive a NetID, the department is responsible for tracking the student's or staff's sick time accruals and usage.

26. Why isn't Kronos administering sick leave hours?

The current version of Kronos used by the University cannot be customized to support the tracking and usage of this sick time. Therefore, it is necessary to have myHR included in the setup and application.

Student Workers

27. How are student workers impacted by the Chicago and Cook County Paid Sick Leave Ordinances?

Student workers and graduate students working for the University in paid positions that are not related to their academic studies are eligible to accrue paid sick leave at a rate of one hour for every 40 hours worked and can take sick leave time once it is accrued.

28. When can I take a sick day?

Once eligible, graduate students and non-work study students can begin to take earned, accrued sick days after July 1, 2018. College work-study students can begin taking earned, accrued sick days, September 1, 2018.

29. Can qualified student workers borrow sick time, or receive an advance of paid sick time, that has not yet been accrued?

Student workers who accrue paid sick leave cannot use more paid sick time than they have accrued. Any sick time taken by student workers in excess of their accrued paid sick leave balance will be unpaid.

30. How does the new paid sick leave ordinance affect a student worker or staff member who holds multiple positions at Northwestern University?

A student worker or staff member will earn sick time for hours worked. In cases where a student or staff member has multiple jobs and multiple pay rates, the student or staff member will submit the paid sick time request in myHR for the job(s) they are scheduled to work on the day of illness.

For example, a student worker is scheduled to work at two jobs on Wednesday—two hours at Norris Center (which pays \$11/hour), and three hours at the University Library (which pays \$12/hour). The student worker is ill and cannot work either job on the scheduled workday, Wednesday. The student worker will enter a request in myHR for two sick hours for the position at Norris, and three sick hours for the position at the University Library. The student worker will be paid for a total of five sick hours. Two hours will be paid at an hourly rate of \$11/hour and three hours will be paid at \$12/hour. In short, staff members or student workers should enter requests for paid sick time in myHR for the job(s) they are scheduled to work on the day on which the illness occurs.

31. Does a student worker's accrued sick time carry over if he/she gets a new job on campus?

Student workers who have been terminated retain their accrued sick leave from their previous position(s) only if they are rehired within the 120 days. Student workers who transfer to another position with no break in service retain their accrued sick leave.

32. Will sick hours be charged to college work-study funding?

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