

## Furloughed Employee FAQ

### **Q. When will I be notified if I am being recalled from furlough or if my furlough will be extended?**

Furloughed employees will be given at least one-week notice of any change in furlough status.

### **Unemployment Questions**

#### **Q. Is my furlough eligible for unemployment insurance (UI) benefits?**

Unemployment insurance (UI) eligibility is determined by the California Employment Development Department (EDD). You are furloughed temporarily and may use your furlough letter as evidence of your employment status if EDD requests it. Additional information related to California state unemployment can be found [here](#).

#### **Q. How do I apply for Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits?**

Please visit the [EDD website](#) for information and instructions on how to apply online or to print an application.

*Tip:* When applying online, the University's third party administrator's address in Montana will appear. You do not need to update the address.

#### **Q. How is my unemployment insurance benefit amount determined?**

Please [visit](#) the EDD's website. There you will find a detailed explanation of how the amount is determined.

#### **Q. If I am furloughed, can I take a part-time job outside of USF to cover wages?**

Yes. The university has no policy that would restrict a furloughed staff member from taking a part time job. You should check with EDD to ensure this will not have an impact on your unemployment benefits.

### **Benefit Questions**

#### **Q. Will my years of service with USF be impacted by the furlough?**

There will be no break in your years of service during this furlough with respect to employee recognition, tuition remission, or vacation accrual.

#### **Q. Will the university pay me the value of my unused vacation days at the start of the furlough?**

Yes. If you have a balance of accrued vacation leave, you may elect to receive a one-time lump sum payment to be received on August 7, 2020. You may elect to cash out up to 100% of your accrued vacation balance as of July 15, 2020. If you want to choose this option, you need to do so by submitting the Furloughed Optional Vacation Payout form to [humanresources@usfca.edu](mailto:humanresources@usfca.edu) by noon on July 31, 2020.

**Q. Is there any additional information for USF staff members who are assigned to furlough status while already on an approved leave of absence?**

Both the furlough status and the leave status continue simultaneously. The staff member should take care to follow the guidelines in place for each status. Questions should be addressed to [leaves@usfca.edu](mailto:leaves@usfca.edu).

**Q. If I choose not to receive the value of unused accrued vacation leave, will my accrued vacation leave go away while I am on furlough?**

No. Your accrued vacation days will remain in place. Vacation cap will remain the same.

**Q. Will I accrue sick or vacation time while on furlough?**

Yes, while you are on furlough, your sick and vacation time accruals will continue at the same rate they would have accrued if you had been working your usual hours.

**Q. Can I use accrued sick time or the San Francisco Public Health Emergency Leave Ordinance Hours (PHELO) to extend the period for which I am being paid?**

No. If you are on furlough you cannot use sick or PHELO hours to extend pay while on furlough.

**Q. Will the university pay me the value of my unused accrued sick time at the start of furlough?**

No. Under university policy, sick time is not compensable.

**Q. Is the one-time vacation payment taxable?**

The one-time payment will include applicable federal and state tax deductions.

**Q. If I or my dependents are using the tuition remission benefit, am I still eligible for the benefit if I am furloughed?**

Yes. Your tuition remission benefits will continue. There will be no changes to your current eligibility for tuition remission or exchange benefits for you, your spouse, or your children.

If you or your dependents are taking graduate courses, you continue to be responsible for the taxation payment for the courses. You will be notified by September 15, 2020 of the taxation amount due for your fall semester enrollment if you are no longer on payroll or do not earn enough to cover the amount. Payment of this amount will be due by September 30, 2020. For questions, please contact [tuitionremission@usfca.edu](mailto:tuitionremission@usfca.edu).

**Q. I have been furloughed, will I still be covered under my current health and welfare benefits?**

Yes, you and any covered family members will remain covered by the benefits in which you are currently enrolled. There will be no disruption in coverage. To view your benefits, please log into [USFWorks](#).

**Q. How will I continue to pay my share of the employee premiums?**

If you are 100 percent furloughed (not working), the university will pay 100 percent of your medical, dental, vision, basic life, LTD and EAP benefits. If you are furloughed at 46.67 percent (.53 FTE), you will pay 53.33 percent of your employee cost share. If you are furloughed at 20 percent (.80 FTE), you will pay 80 percent of your employee cost share. The university will pay the additional employee portion of the premiums. Regardless of furlough percentage, the university pays 100 percent for your basic life, LTD, and EAP benefits.

**Q. Can I withdraw money or take out a loan from my retirement account?**

Please visit the [Retirement FAQ](#) for more information about retirement accounts.

**Q. If I am on an unpaid furlough, can I expect to continue receiving the employer retirement contribution into my 401(a) plan?**

The employer contribution into the 401(a) plan is based on eligible compensation you receive from hours worked. Because your furlough is unpaid, you will not receive the employer contribution into your 401(a) plan.

**Q. If I am on furlough with a reduction in hours worked, can I expect to continue receiving the employer retirement contribution into my 401(a) plan?**

Yes. The regular salary that you earn is eligible compensation for the 401(a) Plan. Therefore, you will continue receiving the employer contribution on that compensation into your 401(a) Plan.

**Q. If I am on furlough with a reduction in hours worked, can I continue contributing money into my 403(b) Plan?**

Yes. If you currently have a 403(b) salary reduction on file, the flat dollar amount or percentage will continue to be deducted from your paycheck. If you want to stop contributing or reduce the amount of your contribution into the 403(b) Plan, you must log into [Retirement at Work](#) and update your current elections.

**Q. If I am on an unpaid furlough, can I continue contributing money into my 403(b) Plan?**

The employee contribution into the 403(b) Plan is deducted from eligible compensation you receive from hours worked. Because your furlough is unpaid, you will not be able to continue contributing into your 403(b) Plan.

**Q. If I am on an unpaid furlough and choose to cash out some or all of my accrued vacation hours, will I receive the employer contribution into the 401(a) plan from this payout?**

No. Vacation payout is not considered eligible compensation for the employer contribution into the 401(a) Plan.

**Q. Can I put more into my 403(b) from the vacation pay out?**

Yes. Vacation payout is retirement eligible for 403(b) purposes. Please visit [Retirement FAQ](#) for more information.

**Q. I am currently enrolled in the Commuter Check Direct (CCD) program and would like to opt out while furloughed. How would I go about doing this?**

Log on to your account with Commuter Check Direct at [Commuter Benefits](#) and select “Options” from the drop down menu, then select “Opt-Out Options” and click “Save”. You can also contact CCD at (888) 235-9223 for assistance.

**Q. Will I be able to use the Koret, Gleeson Library and other facilities?**

Koret and Gleeson Library are currently closed due to COVID-19. As a USF employee you are still eligible to use all university services when they resume operations.

**Q. What happens to my healthcare FSA account while on a furlough?**

If you on a 100 percent furlough (i.e., not working) you are considered to be on an unpaid leave of absence and therefore your healthcare FSA account will be suspended during your period on furlough. This means you will not be able to incur new expenses during this period of time. However, you can continue to submit claims that were incurred prior to your furlough.

If you are on a partial furlough (i.e., working), healthcare FSA contributions will continue to be deducted from your paycheck and you may continue to incur and submit your claims.

**Q. What happens to my dependent care FSA (employee contribution) account while on a furlough?**

If you are on a 100 percent furlough (i.e., not working) you are considered to be on an unpaid leave of absence and therefore your dependent care FSA account will be suspended during your period on furlough. This means you will not be able to incur new expenses during this period of time. However, you can continue to submit claims that were incurred prior to your furlough.

If you are on a less than 100 percent furlough (i.e., working), dependent care FSA contributions will continue to be deducted from your paycheck and you may continue to incur and submit your claims.

**Q. What happens to my childcare subsidy (employer contribution) account while on a furlough?**

If you are currently receiving the childcare subsidy, you will continue to receive it during the period of your furlough.

**Q. What happens to my voluntary life benefit plans (voluntary life, voluntary AD&D and voluntary dependent life) if I am 100 percent furloughed?**

You will have two options to maintain your voluntary life benefit plans. The first option is to pay your premium in advance by check each month to maintain your coverage during your furlough. The second option is to pay your premiums upon your return to work through payroll deduction. See “Furlough Elections form” to make your selection.

**Q. Is a furlough considered a qualifying event for me to change my health plan?**

No, furloughs are not considered a qualifying event per the guidelines of a qualifying event mentioned in our benefits guide.

**Employee and Labor Relations Questions**

**Q. Why was I selected to be furloughed or to have my furlough extended?**

Furlough decisions were made based on several factors, including work that is not presently or anticipated to be full-time and work that can be deferred to a later time, and further reductions made in an effort to reduce expenses during this emergency. Regrettably, your position fell into this framework.

**Q. Why wasn't I provided with a return to work date?**

At this time, we are unable to predict the course of the pandemic or when this furlough will end; however, we are committed to staying in regular contact with you.

**Q. I'm currently working on a project that I don't anticipate finishing by my last day. Will I be allowed to work while I'm on 100% furlough?**

No. Once you're furloughed you will not be paid and subsequently unable to continue doing work for the University. During the two weeks prior to your furlough, you can work with your supervisor on a transition plan for any work you haven't completed and that must be completed.

**Q. I'm currently a member of a university task force or a committee such as a search committee, can I still participate while I'm on furlough?**

If you are 100 percent furloughed, you may not continue to participate in any task forces or committees.

**Q. Do I need to set an out-of-office message on my University of San Francisco email?**

If you have been furloughed 100 percent, please do leave an out-of-office message that provides information about who the person should contact instead.

**Q. Do I need to change the greeting on my University of San Francisco voicemail?**

If you have been furloughed 100 percent, please do leave an out-of-office message about who the caller should contact instead.

**Q. I currently rent in Loyola Village, will I still be able to live there?**

Yes. There will be no changes to your current living arrangements.

**Q. Will I need to return my laptop?**

No, you may retain your laptop while you are furloughed.

**Q. If I am newly furloughed, do I need to work during the two weeks leading up to August 1 following notification of my non-working furlough?**

Yes, to be eligible for the furlough program you must be an employee in good standing or have preplanned and approved time off.

## **Compensation Questions**

**Q. Will I be able to adjust my withholding?**

You can change your withholding elections anytime by logging on to USFWorks and navigating to the pay worklet. The job aid for changing your withholding can be found here: [Changing W-4 withholding elections.](#)

**Q. Will I receive holiday pay while I am on a furlough?**

If you are on a full furlough, you will not receive holiday pay. If you are on a less than 100 percent furlough and the holiday falls on your scheduled work day, you will receive holiday pay for the number of hours you are scheduled to work that day.

**Q. I have a monthly auto deduction for my parking permit. May I suspend it while I am on a 100 percent furlough?**

Yes. Please contact Public Safety for assistance.

**Q. I am a member of a union. Do I still have to pay dues?**

You should contact your union representative directly. The university will comply with the applicable terms of the collective bargaining agreement.