

**East Central College**  
**Furlough FAQs as of June 12, 2020**

As you may be aware, the Board of Trustees approved the Administration's recommendation to implement a twelve (12) day furlough plan at the June 8, 2020 board meeting. The furlough was deemed necessary to offset the loss of state funding in both fiscal years 2020 and 2021. On Tuesday, June 9, 2020, Dr. Bauer presented the plan to the employees and you can click [here](#) (password: 8H&+..E&) to view the zoom meeting.

The decision to institute a furlough was finalized on Friday, June 5, 2020 by the Administration. On Monday, June 8, 2020, the employee associations, the ECCNEA, Shared Governance, Human Resources and the Business Office were informed of this decision. The College has applied for the Shared Work Program (more information below) and has been approved.

Below is a list of questions concerning furloughs.

**1. What is ECC's furlough plan?**

Dr. Bauer provided the following furlough plan.

Target: 5% reduction in FY21 payroll costs

- Projected withholding of \$848,352
- Estimated 5% reduction in payroll: \$433,587

Implementation

- 1 furlough day per month: 12 through June 30, 2021
- Optional: Up to 12 furlough days through July 24, 2020\* (Employee is eligible for enhanced unemployment benefits)
- Insurance benefits maintained
- Service time reduced by amount of furlough

No Planned Layoffs

- Assuming no further state reductions or other significant change to revenue
- Hiring Freeze
- Exceptions must be approved by President

Furloughs provide half of projected withholding

- Remaining cuts: ◦ Hiring freeze: \$351,630 ◦ Non-personnel costs: \$63,135
- All employees Share in Reduction
- Financial Impact of COVID-19 Occurring in FY20 & FY21
  - Return to Base for FY22
  - Any raises for FY22 determined on base salary, not reduced/furloughed wages

Next Steps

- Assist employees with filing to obtain benefits
- Schedule staff to ensure service is provided to students

**2. When can I take my furlough days?**

You can start your furlough days effective June 9, 2020. The College was approved on June 11, 2020 for the shared work program and a reduction of hours can be retroactively to June 9, 2020. The College has been approved for this program through June 5, 2021. You will need supervisor approval to make sure your department is covered. Below are a few examples of how you could use the furlough days.

- 1 day each month from June 2020 through June 2021
- 1 – 2 days a week or 8-16 hours per week
- In order to receive expanded federal unemployment benefits through July 24, 2020 through the shared work program, you would need a minimum 20% (8 hours for full-time employees) reduction in hours.

- Under the shared work program, you will need a minimum 20 % reduction in work hours for the week and must work a minimum of 24 hours in a week to qualify for unemployment benefits.

**3. How do I find out how much unemployment benefits I am eligible to receive?**

You can use the [claims calculator](#) to determine your weekly benefit amount which is based on your earnings. If an individual works a partial week, their weekly unemployment benefit will be reduced.

**4. How do I receive my unemployment benefits?**

In order to receive benefits, for employees who are new to filing for unemployment, you will need to set up an account on [Uinteract Site](#). If you have received unemployment benefits previously, you will have an account. You will want to verify your address and bank account information is correct. The Business office has created a user guide for [exempt](#) and [non-exempt staff](#) on how to create an account which is below. Please note, when setting up your account, it is very important that your mailing address is current.

You can learn more about how unemployment works by watching the videos on setting up your account on the state's webpage: <https://labor.mo.gov/DES/videos>.

**5. What is the shared work program?**

The Shared Work Unemployment Compensation Program is an alternative to layoffs for employers faced with a reduction in available work. It allows an employer to divide the available work among a specified group of affected employees instead of a layoff. These employees receive a portion of their unemployment benefits while working reduced hours. To participate, an employer must complete an application for the affected unit within the company and submit it to the Division of Employment Security (DES) for approval. The College has been approved for this program. Learn more here: [www.sharedwork.mo.gov](http://www.sharedwork.mo.gov)

**6. How many hours can I work and how much vacation/holiday/sick pay can I get a week?**

Under the shared work program, an employee's pay and hours worked must be reduced by a minimum of 20% to be eligible for unemployment benefits. This means that full-time employee should work at least 24 but no more than 32 hours in a work week. Here is the link that shows how hours work and paid leave can be combined in order to receive benefits. [https://labor.mo.gov/sites/labor/files/pubs\\_forms/MODES-SW-4.pdf](https://labor.mo.gov/sites/labor/files/pubs_forms/MODES-SW-4.pdf). The College will report the hours worked/paid leave/furlough leave so an employee's hours worked doesn't have to be in a full eight (8) hour day but has to be a minimum 20% reduction in hours worked for the week.

**7. What does the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program provide and when do I receive the benefits?**

The FPUC provides an additional \$600 payment per week to those eligible for at least one dollar (\$1 US) in state unemployment benefits during the same week of a furlough. The \$600 federal supplement provided under the FPUC is effective the week beginning March 29, 2020. Payments to eligible recipients began the week of April 12, 2020. Payments will be made retroactively for claims filed on or after March 29, 2020. The last payable week under the FPUC will be the week ending July 25, 2020. During the FPUC program period, claimants who are eligible to receive regular unemployment weekly payments will receive the additional \$600 FPUC payment.

**8. Who pays for the additional \$600 provided under the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) program?**

The FPUC is 100% federally funded.

**9. How soon will I receive my unemployment payment?**

The turnaround time for payment could take up to 10 days after filed and payment could vary from week to week.

**10. What if I am not eligible for any unemployment, can I still receive the \$600 under the CARES Act?**

No, an individual must be eligible for at least \$1 of state unemployment benefits.

**11. Will the College close on Fridays during the summer to make up for furlough?**

No, the College will remain open on Fridays to support enrollment goals and provide service to students.

**12. How will part-time employees be impacted with furloughs?**

Part-time employees may have their hours reduced a minimum of 20% of regularly scheduled hours over the next few weeks in order to receive unemployment benefits and the Federal Cares Act \$600. Additional guidance will be provided early next week. Part-time employee hours will be determined by their respective manager based on workload.

**13. How is shared work calculated for part-time employees to be eligible for unemployment benefits?**

Your regularly scheduled work hours will need to be reduced by 20-40%.

**14. Will I be able to rollover my personal, vacation and sick leave?**

Yes, Dr. Bauer approved for personal leave from FY20 to be carried over to personal leave for FY21. Through the end of August, 2020 the College will not cap vacation accrual if an employee would otherwise be maxed out.

**15. Can employees still earn vacation and sick days monthly with having unpaid time reported due to furloughs?**

Yes, employees will still earn leave if they take unpaid leave during the month because of the furloughs. This will be an exception to the policy until June 5, 2021.

**16. Regarding any deductions (family insurance coverage, ASI flex, donations, etc.), if wages are lower than the employee contributions, what will the process be for employees to repay the College?**

The payroll department will work with the employee to develop a new deduction schedule if the deduction amount exceeds net earnings.

**17. Will my insurance benefits continue during furlough days?**

Yes, the College will continue all full-time employee insurance benefits for the entire month, unless the employee separates from the College.

**18. Can an employee scheduled to take leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) be furloughed?**

Yes, however, no days associated with the furlough should count against the FMLA entitlement. Also, the request for FMLA leave cannot be used as a selection reason to decide who gets furloughed.

**19. How will my retirement benefits be affected?**

Retirement benefits could be impacted if an employee is earning less than 95% of their annual salary. If an employee earns 95% of their annual salary reported to the retirement system, the employee should receive a full year of service. The retirement system will calculate the service according to their guidelines. Contact PSRS/PEERS at <https://www.psrs-peers.org/>.

**20. Do I need to complete leave form for furlough days?**

Yes, all employees will need to complete a leave form. The updated leave form is on the Human Resources webpage. It can also be accessed [here](#).

**21. Will the July 3<sup>rd</sup> holiday be moved to another day so that employees can furlough July 3?**

Yes, Dr. Bauer approved to move the July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 holiday to another date during the year.

**22. Is July 3, 2020 a mandatory furlough day?**

The College will be closed and the Fourth of July holiday will be recognized later this year.

**23. Can I use Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup> as one of the furlough days?**

Yes, you can use July 24, 2020 as a furlough day. This is the last day for the expanded benefits.

**24. Will there be a limited number of employees who can take furlough between now and July 24 to have sufficient people working to service students?**

Yes, on days we are open, supervisors will make sure the departments are staffed accordingly.

**25. How many furlough days do faculty need to take?**

Implementation of furlough days for faculty is under discussion with faculty leadership, recognizing that contracts for faculty do not begin until August.

**26. If I take 3-5 days in one week for furlough, is the process different for requesting unemployment benefits?**

Yes. An employee furloughed for 3-5 days in a single work week isn't eligible for the shared work program. However, the employee can still file for unemployment benefits through the Unemployment Insurance program. You can find more information here.

**27. Can I take a personal leave time, a vacation day and/or a sick day the same week as a furlough?**

Yes, but there are restrictions according to the shared work program. Here are a few examples how taking leave may impact your benefits. If an employee is unable to work or uses sick leave, they are not eligible for unemployment benefits through the shared work program.

Scenario	Eligibility for shared work hours
Employee physically worked 24-32 hours	Employee is eligible for shared work hours
Employee did not physically work 24 hours	Employee is <b>not</b> eligible for shared work hours
Employee works more than 32 hours	Employee is <b>not</b> eligible for shared work hours
Employee physically worked 24 hours and received pay for a holiday	Employee is eligible for shared work hours 24 hours + 8 holiday hours = 32 eligible hours
Employee physically worked 24 hours and got 16 hours of holiday pay	Employee is <b>not</b> eligible for shared work hours 24 hours + 16 holiday hours = 40; this is over the 32 hour limit
Employee physically worked 16 hours and received 8 hours holiday	Employee is <b>not</b> eligible for shared work hours. Employee did not physically work 24 hours
Anytime employee is not available for work	Employee is <b>not</b> eligible for shared work hours.

**28. Are my benefits taxable?**

Yes, unemployment benefits are subject to federal and state income taxes. When you create your account on Uinteract Site, you'll be able to elect that taxes be taken out before receiving unemployment benefits.

**29. How do I find my quarterly earnings to enter into the [claims calculator](#)?**

An employee can find their quarterly earnings on their eCentral site. Since this is an estimated amount, ECC employees can divide their annual salary by four to get estimated quarterly earnings. If an employee has another job outside of the College, the employee will need to add this total their earnings.

**30. The unemployment partial calculator shows I will not receive any benefit. Am I still eligible?**

ECC is participating in the Shared Work Program so the partial benefits calculator does not apply for calculating unemployment benefits when a company participates in the Shared Work Program.

**31. How do I file for regular unemployment benefits if I don't qualify for the shared work program if I take a full week of furlough?**

You would file a claim through the UINTERACT system. You can learn more about how to file for unemployment. [How to file for unemployment - VIDEO.](#)

**32. Do I need to take more than one furlough day a week in order qualify for partial unemployment benefits through the shared work program?**

No, but your work hours have to be reduced by a minimum of 20% and you only earn 80% of your regular salary with the College.

**33. If I were to take 5 furlough days in one week, I understand I could not report that under the shared work. My question is could I take the remaining 7 days under shared work? In other words, a combination of the two programs? I have a scheduled vacation and just trying to figure out the best way to utilize my furlough.**

Yes, you can take a combination of both programs. You are correct that you cannot receive unemployment benefits through the Shared Work program if you work less than 24 hours in a week.

**34. Do I need to submit a weekly claim to receive my unemployment benefits?**

No, since the College is participating in the Shared Work Program, you are NOT filing a claim. The College will file on your behalf unless you do not meet the minimum of 24 work hours per week.

**35. How do I know if I qualify for the state's maximum unemployment weekly benefit of \$320?**

Typically, if your annual salary is more than \$32,000, you most likely qualify for the maximum weekly benefit of \$320. You can confirm your maximum weekly benefit by using the [claims calculator](#). If you earn less than \$32,000, you can use the claims calculator to determine your weekly benefit.

**36. How do I determine my unemployment benefit through the shared work program?**

You will need to determine your maximum weekly benefit which can be done by using the [claims calculator](#). If your work hours are reduced by 20%, you will receive 20% of your weekly unemployment benefit.

- Weekly Benefit Amount: \$320
- Partial unemployment benefit based on 20% reduction is \$64 a day (\$320 X 20%)

Here is a quick video providing an overview of the shared work program and how benefits are calculated for the shared work program. <https://labor.mo.gov/shared-work>.

**37. What is the maximum annual salary I can earn and still qualify for unemployment benefits through the shared work program?**

There is no maximum salary since the program provides partial unemployment to an employee who experiences a 20%-40% reduction in work hours. Through the Shared Work Program, employees are eligible for partial unemployment benefits in addition to partial salary.

**38. Can an employee perform any work/regular duties for the College during a furlough?**

No. Employees cannot perform work in any capacity during a furlough day, including answering email, returning calls.

**39. Can an employee come on campus or retrieve items from work space during a furlough day?**

Yes.

**40. Who can I talk to about the impacts of the furlough on me?**

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free, confidential service that provides short-term counseling services to help address personal, financial, career, and work-life issues to eligible employees and their families. To access this benefit, simply call the EAP at 800-624-5544 and identify yourself as an East Central College employee. Our Human Resources team is here for you. If you would like to speak to one of our team members about how the furlough will impact you, please reach out to Human Resources at 636-584-6712.

**41. If I have a second employer, will this impact my ability to receive unemployment benefits through the shared work program?**

No, your earnings at your second employer are not considered a part of the shared work program. However, your second employer or previous employer will be informed that you are filing for unemployment benefits and will have the opportunity to protest.

**42. Why is there a protest period for unemployment claims?**

Unemployment insurance is paid by employers. There is no money taken out of any employee's paycheck to pay for it and it is not paid for by your taxes. It is strictly paid for out of your employer's unemployment account. Because of this, your last employer and all of your base period employers have the right to protest an employee's unemployment claim. In fact, because employers pay taxes that fund the account from which unemployment benefits are paid, we have to notify employers in your base period and give them an opportunity to protest before we pay benefits out of the fund to you. This is called a protest period and will show online on your claim as a pending protest. This is a usual part of the process and is a period of about ten days. If after that time, no issues are discovered and no protests are received, you would receive back payment for any money due.

**43. Has Missouri waived the waiting week for those eligible to receive unemployment benefits due to the coronavirus?**

Yes, Under the authority of Missouri EO20-4, the Missouri Department of Labor has waived any waiting week requirement served for all claims filed as a result of the coronavirus. That means, unlike prior, eligible individuals will receive payment for the waiting week as their first payment and not have to wait until they have exhausted benefits to be paid for the waiting week.

Updated 6-12-20 at 4:45pm