



December 16, 2021

**RE: Updated Message from the Department of Human Rights & Equal Economic Opportunity on COVID-19**

Dear Friends and Colleagues:

The City of Saint Paul is dedicated to ensuring a safe working environment for our community and workforce to stay safe and healthy. Over the last twenty-two months, the City has closely monitored the ongoing outbreak of COVID-19. We continue to rely on our key partners, including the [Minnesota Department of Health \(MDH\)](#), [Ramsey County Public Health](#), and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#).

The City has continued to update its COVID-19 guidance throughout the pandemic. Recently, the City has:

- Required face coverings in all City-controlled properties, such as City Hall, Parks & Recreation Centers, Libraries, and other properties;
- Required all City of Saint Paul staff to complete a vaccination series no later than December 31, 2021.

Additionally, we in HREEO recognize that the public continues to require services including human rights and labor standards investigations, business certification and technical assistance, police-civilian review, accessibility and language assistance, and procurement services. We continue to offer these core services to the City and the public. As a reminder, the following changes apply to HREEO until further notice.

### Staffing and Hours

HREEO's key functions are continuing, with staff using virtual tools where possible. Most employees are working remotely, although staff are available for in-person meetings where necessary. Employees who are sick, need preventive care, or need to care for their family members or manage changes in childcare are being provided flexible and remote scheduling as well as use of vacation, sick leave, comp time, and Earned Sick and Safe Time. If you require service from HREEO, staff is available by phone and e-mail and can also arrange virtual meetings via Microsoft Teams.

### Hospitality Recall Ordinance

On June 16, 2021, the Saint Paul City Council passed the Hospitality Workers—COVID-19 Pandemic Related Re-Employment Rights ordinance ("Hospitality Recall Ordinance"). The ordinance took effect on July 16, 2021. Under the ordinance, an employer shall offer its laid-off employees all job positions which become available at a covered enterprise (meaning a hotel or event center) after July 16, 2021, and for which the laid-off employee is qualified.

Under the ordinance, laid off employees are entitled to the following:

- 1) For offers of employment made via e-mail or text, employees have five (5) business days to accept or decline the offer.
- 2) For offers of employment made via mail, employees have ten (10) business days from the date of the mailed offer to accept or decline the offer.
- 3) Once an offer is accepted, a laid off employee has seven (7) calendar days after expiration of the time for acceptance of the offer to be available for return to work, unless the employer and laid off employee mutually agree upon a different time.
- 4) An employer who declines to offer a position to a laid-off employee on the grounds of lack of qualification and instead hires someone other than the laid-off employee must provide the laid-off employee a written notice of the non-selection within thirty (30) days of the date of hire, documenting the reasons for such decision.

If you believe there has been a violation of this ordinance, you may file a complaint with HREEO either by calling 651-266-8966, or e-mailing [LaborStandards@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:LaborStandards@ci.stpaul.mn.us). Please visit [www.stpaul.gov/laborstandards](http://www.stpaul.gov/laborstandards) for more information. In addition to filing with our office, you may also bring a private action against your former employer for violations of the Hospitality Recall Ordinance.

The Hospitality Recall Ordinance is in effect until December 31, 2022.

### **Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST)**

In 2017, our City passed the [Earned Sick and Safe Time \(ESST\) Ordinance](#). The ordinance protects public health and welfare. Under the ordinance, employers must provide ESST to their employees working in the City of Saint Paul. Employees can use ESST to cover absences related to care for themselves or their family member involving:

- Physical or mental illness, injury, or other health condition
- Medical appointments to diagnose, treat, prevent or care for an illness
- Closure of employee's or employee family member's place of business or place of care to limit exposure to an infectious agent

If you have questions about this information or need assistance with interpretation of this law, please visit our [Labor Standards](#) webpage for more information and resources. HREEO has compiled a list of Frequently Asked Questions, included below and available at [www.stpaul.gov/ESST](http://www.stpaul.gov/ESST). You can also call HREEO at (651)-266-8966 or e-mail [laborstandards@stpaul.gov](mailto:laborstandards@stpaul.gov). Please be aware that HREEO cannot give legal advice.

HREEO encourages employers to go above and beyond the requirements of the ordinance where possible to help protect employee and public health and welfare during this pandemic. Some employers are providing emergency paid leave, flexible schedules, and allowing employees to go negative on ESST balances. Thank you to the employers who are voluntarily implementing these additional worker protections during this difficult time.

Please visit Labor Standards Enforcement and Education website for more detailed information. You can also e-mail us at [Laborstandards@stpaul.gov](mailto:Laborstandards@stpaul.gov) or call HREEO at 651-266-8966.

## Confronting Stigma

As per Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), public health emergencies like COVID-19 can lead to social stigma toward people, places or things. Some residents and businesses have reported experiencing acts of racism and xenophobia because of the myths surrounding COVID-19. Together, we can counter stigma and discrimination by learning and sharing facts.

Under City of Saint Paul's Legislative Code Chapter 183 our Human Rights Division investigates complaints of discrimination based on race, religion, national origin, age, disability, familial status, retaliation, etc. If you think you have experienced discrimination or harassment as a result of stigma, please contact HREEO at 651-266-8966 or e-mail us at [hrightscomplaints@ci.stpaul.mn.us](mailto:hrightscomplaints@ci.stpaul.mn.us).

## Updates

You can stay updated about developments, planning and prevention of COVID-19 by visiting [City of Saint Paul](#) or [Ramsey County COVID-19](#) webpage.

Thank you for taking measures to keep your family and our community safe.

Best regards,



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Director  
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