

College of the Siskiyous COVID-19 Virus FAQs for Employees

March 17, 2020

We know there are a lot of questions right now. The list below is the first of what we believe will be multiple iterations of the District answering questions as the situation around COVID-19 evolves.

Our guiding principle is this: everything we are planning and implementing during this COVID-19 situation is in order to keep everyone who can work – working in order to for employees to remain in paid status as much as possible.

These FAQs are organized into the most vital categories of questions about the College’s shift from an on-campus density of employees, classes, and students to a remote instruction and operational organization as swiftly as possible.

We believe these FAQs will generate more questions over time. We want to hear from you to help you continue contributing to the College, as well as we want to share information with you just as soon as it is available.

Essential and Non-Essential

1. What is the meaning of essential vs non-essential?

All positions at the College are vital and valued. We are a lean organization, and it takes everyone functioning and contributing effectively to keep our doors open and to fulfill our mission.

However, during a state of emergency such as the one, the College is currently in, essential and non-essential functions have distinct definitions, which are:

- **Essential**: Functions/duties/responsibilities that must be completed in order to keep the College’s students, faculty, and staff safe and business running as normal as possible.
- **Non-essential**: Functions that do not have to be completed immediately and may be delayed until the emergency or crisis is over. These functions are equally important, but may not be needed as quickly as other functions.

This distinction is made solely on the basis of essential duties of the jobs and the needs of the College and varies depending upon the circumstances and the nature and severity of the event.

Each Department Director and Vice President will identify the essential functions/positions in their area, and send those recommendations to the President for final approval.

A flowchart has been developed to assist in identifying options depending on the category or categories based on your situation. Please address any questions regarding specifics of your position using the normal chain of command (your immediate supervisor first, followed by your area Dean or Director, then area administrator (Vice President or Superintendent/President). Please refer questions regarding leaves, accommodations,

bargaining agreements to the Human Resources Office. The best way to reach HR is either hr@siskiyous.edu or 530-938-5317.

2. My supervisor says my position is an essential function position. I say no. What happens now?

The District has right of assignment. If your position is deemed essential, discuss with your supervisor and appropriate administrator if you disagree. You may still be required to work from home or report to the campus as an essential function.

3. How is it equitable that an essential employee has to come to work or work from home and non-essential staff are paid but are not working? Do non-essential staff still get paid?

During an emergency, many of us will be asked to do work outside our normal routines. If the function you perform is deemed essential, you will be asked to work either from home or on campus. If you are in a position that does not require work from home or from your office, you may still be paid. Payment depends on the decisions made at the Federal and state government level regarding pay during the COVID-19 pandemic. We ask everyone to recognize and accept that this situation is not normal. In a state of emergency, the District will make decisions accordingly.

Continuation of Work

4. Can I work remotely? Where do I get the form? Who has to approve?

Yes, if your job enables you to do so. As much as we want to get employees able to work remotely, there are a few steps to accomplish this goal. Follow the steps below:

Step 1: Complete the Telecommuting Plan Form and request appropriate signatures from your immediate supervisor, area administrator (Vice President level or Superintendent/President), and Human Resources.

Step 2: Information provided will be reviewed by your immediate Supervisor and area Vice President. If approved, your supervisor will provide you with a Telecommuting Plan form. Documentation of the work you complete will be required during the telecommute period.

Step 3: Identify the technology needs and coordinate with IT the securing of necessary District equipment to ensure that the remote work can be accomplished without breaching necessary data security.

5. Can I use my own phone or laptop to perform work?

Using a personal phone or laptop, you can access your work email and documents saved to OneDrive by logging into MySiskiyous. Employees needing VPN access will need to use a District issued laptop or computer.

6. Will the college pay to upgrade my personal internet service or equipment if I have to telecommute?

Unfortunately, the college is not in the position to upgrade, purchase, or obtain equipment for personal use.

Social Distancing vs. Self-Isolation vs. Self-Quarantine

7. What is the difference between isolation and quarantine, and social distancing?

Isolation and quarantine are public health practices used to protect the public by preventing exposure to the general population by infected persons, or to remove persons who may be infected from risking the spread of disease to the general population. Social Distancing is a relatively new term to encourage the general population to separate when out in public to limit the potential spread of a communicable disease. More complete definitions are below:

- **Quarantine:** a method used to separate **ill** persons who have been diagnosed as having a communicable disease from those who are healthy. Quarantine restricts the movement of ill persons to help stop the spread of certain diseases.
- **Isolation:** a self-imposed quarantine, or shelter in place decision, used to separate and restrict the movement of **undiagnosed** persons who may have been exposed to a communicable disease to see if they become ill. These people may have been exposed to a disease and do not know it, or they may have the disease but do not show symptoms. Isolation can also help limit the spread of a communicable disease like COVID-19.
- **Social Distancing:** a preventative measure used by the general population to limit potential spread of a communicable disease. For COVID-19, the recommended distance is six (6) feet.

8. What is the process if I choose to self-isolate?

Please schedule a meeting with Human Resources, by phone or in person, to discuss accommodations through the interactive assessment process.

9. Governor Newsom said on March 15, 2020, those who are 65 and older or vulnerable to COVID-19 should practice home isolation. What if I am healthy and wish to choose to continue coming to work?

Governor Newsom called for this measure because the public must anticipate the rapid spread of COVID-19, and people need to think about those who are older, chronically ill and homeless. The announcement was suggested as a guideline and, as of yet, is not a directive (state order). Please consult with your local healthcare provider to determine whether you should self-isolate. If told you are required to self-isolate, immediately inform your direct supervisor.

10. What if I have some of the underlying health conditions but feel healthy?

Consult with your healthcare provider immediately. Your health and the health of your family is of primary importance. Do not come to work if you are ill, running a fever, or have members of your household who are ill or have a fever.

There are many convenient ways for CVT medical subscribers and eligible dependents to access care for non-emergency services. For more information, contact CVT Member Services at (800) 288-9870 Monday-Friday, 8am to 5pm. **CVT PPO and EPO members** can access **MDLIVE** by calling (888) 632-2738, or registering at www.mdlive.com/cvt.

Self-Assessment

11. How do I know if I should isolate, or self-quarantine?

Consult with your healthcare provider, or check the Centers for Diseases (CDC), Siskiyou Public Health Department, or the State of California Public Health websites for guidelines on self-assessment. These sites will guide you in determining whether isolation or self-quarantine is needed.

12. Do I need a doctor's note to return to work?

CSEA and CTA Collective Bargaining Agreements state that a doctor's note may be required after five (5) consecutive working days for CSEA and three (3) consecutive academic school days for CTA. Any unrepresented staff will follow the CSEA guidelines. In consideration of healthcare providers, if the employee is self-quarantined and showing no symptoms, the doctor's note is waived. If an employee returns to work after having been diagnosed with the coronavirus, a doctor's note is required.

12. Can the District take my temperature?

The District may not take your temperature. However, under California Occupational Safety and Health Act (Cal-OSHA), Districts are required to maintain safe and healthy working conditions for employees and students. Therefore, a supervisor may require an employee who is showing symptoms (such as fever, coughing, or shortness of breath) to leave work.

Districts may also consider the following criteria in order to develop a standard for treating all employees in a non-discriminatory and non-retaliatory manner.

- a. Exhibition of symptoms associated with COVID-19;
- b. Severity of symptoms
- c. Travel to or through areas with known community transmission; and
- d. Known or suspected contact with affected individuals.

13. Does my insurance pay for the COVID-19 test?

For employees covered by the District's health insurance, the COVID-19 test is provided at no cost.

Leaves and Benefits

14. Do I have to use my sick leave or other leave if I need to self-isolate?

You must use your sick leave or other available leave (vacation, no-tell, etc.) if you wish to remain in paid status. There is proposed legislation going through the United States Congress this week that may provide for paid leave. If President Trump signs this bill, titled the FMLA Public Health Emergency Leave Act, unused leave may be reimbursed; however, this will depend on the language in the final bill signed by the President.

15. Do short-term employees have sick leave?

Short-term and student employees employed 90 days or more receive sick leave. After the first 90 days of employment, leave balances are on "MySiskiyous." Click on the "Employee"

tab and then the “Leave” tab. If your leave is not yet posted in “My Siskiyous,” please email Beverly Muelrath in HR at bmuclrath@siskiyous.edu.

16. Do I have to use leave if my child(ren) are out of school?

Local schools are anticipating longer closures, some into the month of April. We understand this may cause a hardship in finding childcare for some families. The federal bill currently going through Congress, as mentioned previously, will address this situation. Until we know how that plays out, you will need to use your leave as noted above.

17. What if I have no leave of any kind, and I have to be off work, what do I do?

In the event you find yourself off work, please check in with Human Resources. In this time of emergency, the District has agreed to allow employees to go into arrears (the negative) for leave, depending on the circumstances. The cap for negative leave is 40 hours.

18. Can I file for unemployment if I have no leave?

The State of California is working to assist California workers hurt or affected by COVID-19. Affected workers can visit the Labor & Workforce Development Agency’s website (<https://www.labor.ca.gov/coronavirus2019/>) or the Employment Development Department (<https://www.edd.ca.gov/>). While the District will not contest requests for unemployment, it is the State of California’s determination whether unemployment should be given.

19. What about my benefits, if I have no leave? How can I pay my employee portion of benefits?

Human Resources staff will help you determine if you qualify for Family Medical Leave (FML). If you qualify, the District will continue to pay the District’s portion. In addition, the College may be able to assist you with benefits payments; this is determined on a case-by-case basis.

20. How do I get my paycheck if I am not on direct deposit?

Paychecks will be mailed to the address on record if the College is closed. If the college is open for essential functions, checks may be picked up at the Fiscal Services Office.

21. How do I know how much leave I have?

You can view your leave balances by going to “MySiskiyous” on the Siskiyous.edu webpage. Click on the “Employee” tab and then the “Leave” tab.

22. I have plenty of leave, and I am happy to donate. May I do that?

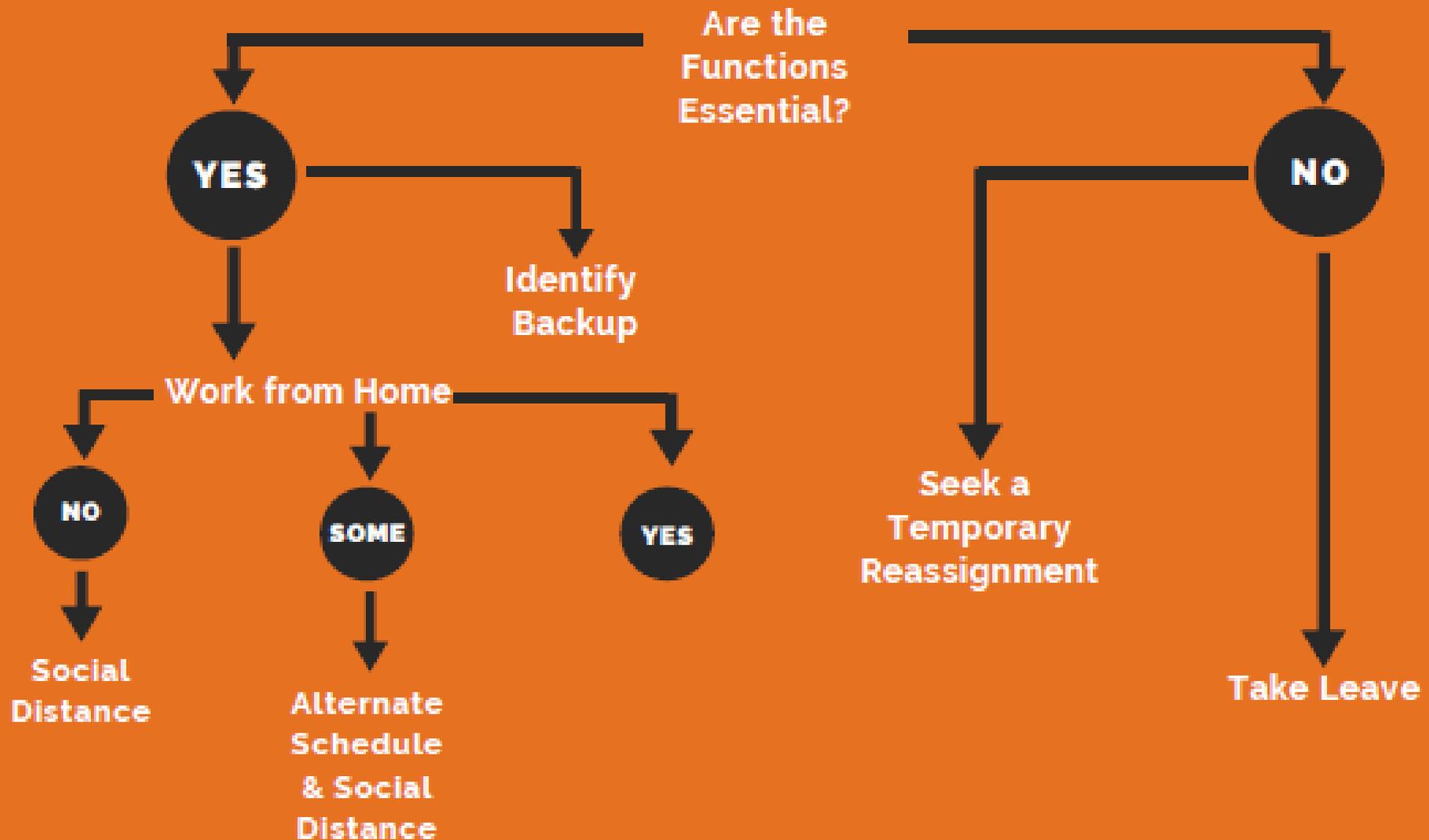
Absolutely. The District already has a Catastrophic Leave Donation Policy in place. However, for this state of emergency Human Resources is establishing a new bank for donated leave specifically for COVID-19. You can donate vacation, comp time, or sick leave to the COVID-19 bank. You must keep a minimum of 40 hours in your vacation leave bank, and one year of sick leave in your sick leave bank. Kelly Groppi in Human Resources manages donated leave.

If you need donated leave, please complete the regular leave request form and notate this is for COVID-19 Leave. After supervisor approval, please forward to Kelly in Human

Resources. The Executive Leadership Team will review and make decisions based on need. The leave bank is available for leaves up to three (3) weeks.

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Essential Function Flowchart



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Self Isolation/Quarantine Flowchart

