

## Memorandum

DATE: May 6, 2020

TO: All Employees

FROM: Brendan R. Shannon, Director of Human Resources

SUBJECT: COVID-19 Benefits and Attendance Policy Update

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This memo provides four important updates regarding COVID-19 related issues:

1. New Families First Coronavirus Response Act (“FFCRA”) Emergency Leave Request Form
2. Emergency Deferred Compensation Withdrawals
3. Childcare Vouchers
4. Attendance Policy Amnesty

Please see the updated [Benefits Resources](#) document for further details on Deferred Compensation Withdrawals and Childcare Vouchers.

### 1. New FFCRA Emergency Leave Request Form

MTS has revised the [FFCRA Emergency Leave Request Form](#) to simplify the request process. Employees who have exhausted all of their leave balances and wish to accrue negative vacation or annual leave may use this form to make their request. Effective May 7, 2020, prior versions of the form will not be accepted.

### 2. Emergency Deferred Compensation Withdrawals

MTS continues its efforts to mitigate the financial impact of the COVID-19 crisis on employees. To provide further financial assistance, MTS partnered with ICMA to implement a program which allows employees to withdraw funds from their deferred compensation accounts (Coronavirus-Related Disbursement or “CRD Program”). As authorized by the CARES Act, the program allows eligible employees to withdraw up to \$100,000 from their 457(b) accounts while avoiding the tax penalties that are usually associated with Emergency Withdrawals. The program also allows the employee to repay their withdrawal over a three-year period, or pay required income taxes over a three-year period.

Please know there is consensus among financial advisors that withdrawals from retirement accounts should be treated as a last resort. Based on recent declines in the stock market, this is not an ideal time to sell or withdraw from investment accounts.

### 3. Childcare Vouchers



The closure of all public schools and most childcare facilities has caused many MTS employees to make significant adjustments to ensure their children receive care while they are at work. The County of San Diego and a nonprofit organization called COVID-19 Childcare Fund have implemented voucher programs to assist essential employees in paying for childcare. Both programs currently have wait lists, but will likely receive additional funding in the near future.

Employees who are currently paying for childcare are encouraged to join both waiting lists using the links below:

- [San Diego County Essential Worker Childcare Voucher Program](#)
- [COVID-19 Childcare Fund](#)

The Human Resources Department continues to research childcare locations and funding assistance on behalf of employees. As further options are developed, they will be added to the [Benefits Resources](#) document which is available on the MTS COVID-19 employee web pages.

#### **4. Attendance Policy Amnesty**

As you know, at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, MTS suspended enforcement of its disciplinary policies related to absenteeism. All attendance policies will remain suspended until June 1, 2020, at which point they will be reinstated. Most employees who are absent for COVID-19 related reasons after June 1, 2020 will not accrue attendance points or occurrences if they apply for FMLA and provide the appropriate documentation.

cc: All Agency Bulletin Boards  
All COVID-19 web pages