



TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SPARTAN COMMUNITY:

In the wake of Governor Northam's Stay at Home order, the Norfolk State University (NSU) Office of Human Resources (OHR) is providing additional guidance during this transition. Guidance topics include the following:

- ð Teleworking
- ð Public Health Emergency Leave (PHEL) and other available benefits
- ð The Employee Assistance Programs

TELEWORKING

Essential Employees

Careful consideration has been given to the identification of employees considered essential to the continuity of university operations. To comply with the Governor's Stay at Home order, we will continue to evaluate the necessity of employees maintaining an essential designation. The University's priority is to maintain the health, safety and welfare of the members of our campus and to limit potential exposure to COVID-19. To ensure limited exposure, work arrangements have been modified to facilitate social distancing, access to hygiene materials, and staggering work schedules to reduce the number of people working in each area at a time. The following guidance points are for employees designated as essential at this time and their supervisors:

- ð Given the fluid circumstances of COVID-19, the designation of employees may continue to change.
- ð For positions not eligible for remote working, supervisors are encouraged to give employees special assignments or professional development opportunities that can be completed remotely.
- ð Governor Northam has advised the following:
Those with chronic health conditions or aged 65 or older should self-quarantine. Public health experts advise that individuals with underlying medical conditions and those aged 65 or older are at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19. Governor Northam encouraged neighbors and friends to stay in touch and regularly check in with high-risk individuals.
Supervisors and managers have been asked to keep this advisement in mind when identifying or re-evaluating the need to continue individuals with an essential on-campus designation.
- ð Should an employee have difficulty arranging childcare due to COVID-19, then the supervisor should contact OHR for guidance. Human Resources can assist the supervisor in identifying remote work opportunities or in facilitating the use of [Public Health Emergency Leave](#).



EMPLOYEES WORKING AT HOME:

NSU has implemented many exceptions to our normal business practices to reduce the spread of COVID-19 to our employees. Teleworking is the best option to reduce exposure to COVID-19 and to maintain continuity of operations.

- ð Our aim is to have minimal financial impact on employees resulting from a loss of income due to COVID-19. Employees that are able to work from home may do so. Employees are also permitted to telework with minors in the home.
- ð We recognize that teleworking may create a challenge for some positions. Supervisors are encouraged to exercise discretion and creativity to identify work opportunities (projects, etc.) that can be done remotely. Examples of special projects include but are not limited to the following
 - Policy and procedure review/development
 - Capturing knowledge of operations and practices to help new employees
 - Reviewing electronic records
 - Reviewing past audit findings and ensuring actions taken to address findings
- ð Professional development may also be included in remote work. Employees can access the Commonwealth of Virginia Learning Center ([COVLC](#)). Contact Stacie Gaines (sdgaines@nsu.edu) in the OHR for assistance in accessing the Center's website.
- ð To the extent possible, employees should continue with regular work assignments. Communicate with your supervisor or manager for guidance and questions.
- ð Document as requested by managers including your leave and time worked (non-exempt employees).
- ð Stay in touch with colleagues and supervisors.
- ð Maintain availability during regular work hours.
- ð All supervisors should exercise concern and civility in making crucial decisions to ensure employees are safe, and seek the guidance of Human Resources as needed.
- ð Complete the telework agreement, scan it and send to askhr@nsu.edu or fax to (804) 823-2805



PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY LEAVE (PHEL)

[The Department of Human Resource Management \(DHRM\) Policy 4.52](#) is providing up to 160 hours of paid leave per leave year to eligible employees to attend to their medical needs and/or those of their immediate family members. The DHRM guidance on PHEL is subject to change. Most employees are eligible for PHEL, including wage employees and other employees who work less than full-time. Employees who work less than full-time can receive a pro-rated PHEL.

- ð The following are employee situations that may qualify for PHEL usage:
 - An employee's own COVID-19 related illness
 - To care for an immediate family member's COVID-19 related illness home-school children due to school closure
 - Employees required by a public health official to be monitored during the COVID-19 incubation, such as required isolation
 - Employee's job is not conducive to telework options
- ð Employees potentially exposed to COVID-19 but are asymptomatic who choose to self-monitor may telework for the incubation period.
- ð PHEL should be the leave of last resort for employees who are well, employees who cannot telework and for employees who need a days to make child/elder care arrangements.
- ð ***Supervisors should consult with the Human Resources (757-823-8160) before approving PHEL for any employee. Once approved, employees may use this special code on timesheets/leave forms***

FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT (FFCRA)

The federal government has two provisions for all employees. Additional information may be found [here](#). When an employee or supervisor believes an employee is eligible for the state or federal special pay provisions, please contact OHR so an appropriate Human Resources administrator can contact the employee for specifics, provide instructions and coordinate with payroll.

- ð **The Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act** – provides 2 weeks of paid sick leave and may be used in addition to PHEL
- ð **Emergency Family and Medical Leave Expansion Act** – The regular FMLA has been expanded to now include additional eligibility reasons. The expansion covers some pay provision (2/3 of pay).
- ð OHR will evaluate each situation provide guidance on the proper method to submit hours and leave.



EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Employee Assistance Programs remain a valuable resource for everyone during this uncertain time. For faculty and staff that have one of the State Health Benefits Plans, you can look on the back of your medical ID card to access the contact number for the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). You have four (4) free consultations at your disposal, and your dependents are eligible to receive the same services as well. You can speak with an EAP specialist who will assess your problem and coordinate assistance.

- ð **ALL** employees (whether you are enrolled in the health plan or not) can access these resources by calling [1-855-223-9277](tel:1-855-223-9277) or going to www.anthemead.com and entering *Commonwealth of Virginia* as the company code. Resources include recorded webinars, legal forms, financial tools, articles, and skill builders.
- ð There are several new recorded webinars have been added to both this new website and the Commonwealth of Virginia website, including topics such as financial guidance, meditation, and how to talk with your children about COVID-19.
- ð If you do not have the State Health Benefits Plan, you can click [here](#) for the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health's Warm-Line. The Warm-Line administrators are there to listen with compassion and provide non-judgmental support. *This is not a hotline* for individuals in need of emergency services.

We hope that everyone is staying safe, practicing social distancing, adjusting to our temporary work environment, and giving care and grace to all with whom we interact. Please make frequent visits to the NSU website [here](#) to stay informed. We will all get through this together. Stay well!