



## Voluntary Furlough Program

### **Overview and Purpose:**

In light of the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the College community, and other fiscal constraints such as declining enrollment and uncertain state and local funding, Monroe Community College is implementing a voluntary furlough program from June 29, 2020 through July 26, 2020. Eligibility for participation in the Voluntary Furlough Program (“VFP”) is based on the ability to perform available work as outlined below. This initiative is a cost saving measure and an attempt to minimize the potential need for further employment actions, such as mandatory furloughs, salary reductions, and/or layoffs while still fulfilling the College’s educational mission.

### **Procedure Statement and Scope:**

A furlough is a temporary unpaid leave, during which affected individuals remain employees of Monroe Community College. The determining factor in approving positions for temporary furlough is the inability to perform available work. Faculty, staff, and administrative employees, including both hourly and exempt employees, are eligible to participate in the VFP.

All furlough decisions are made in accordance with Monroe Community College’s policy on Equal Employment and Non-discrimination in Employment. This VFP is not a substitute for current College policies on layoff or termination and does not contravene or interfere with any provisions of any of the collective bargaining agreements to which the College is a party.

### **Voluntary Furlough Implementation:**

Employees may request voluntary furlough by completing an MCC Voluntary Furlough Application. Participation is strictly voluntary. The application will be sent to the Human Resources Department for review and approval.

All applications for voluntary furlough will be reviewed in accordance with the following steps:

- Human Resources will provide the responsible Vice President (or designee) with a list of employees in their department who have applied to participate in the VFP.
- The responsible Vice President (or designee) will review the list and approve positions for furlough based on the inability to perform available work in accordance with the factors set forth below, and will forward their decisions to the Department of Human Resources. Factors to consider include:
  - Whether the position performs duties in a department or unit that is currently closed;
  - Whether the position perform duties that require the provision of services in person, and the work cannot be conducted remotely; or

- Whether there has been a reduction in the amount of available work for the position, and if available work remains, whether the reduced workload can be absorbed by the manager or other staff or performed at a later date.
  - If there are multiple positions with the same job profile within a department or other unit, and a reduced amount of available work remains, decisions about which individuals continue to perform work will be based upon the qualifications (knowledge, skills and abilities) needed to perform the remaining work.
  - If qualifications are equal, then decisions about which individuals continue to perform work will be based on reverse seniority, measured by years of continuous full-time service (i.e., the more junior person continues to perform work and their request for a voluntary furlough is denied).
  - When selecting among persons who are in the same job profile, the responsible Vice President (or designee) will provide a justification of how they selected the employees.
  
- Human Resources will notify applicants in writing as to whether their furlough application has been approved or denied.

Human Resources will collect the requests for voluntary furlough and forward them to the College Officers for review and to make the final decisions regarding the furlough requests.

**Voluntary Furlough Requirements and Benefits:**

Once approved for furlough, an employee remains on active status, but does not report to work and does not earn a wage. **Employees cannot perform work in any capacity during this time, including answering emails and returning calls.**

During this furlough period, the employee retains the following:

- Their position, without any break or reduction in years of service;
- Currently enrolled health and insurance benefits, including medical, dental, College-provided life insurance, and long-term disability coverage;
- During the period of the furlough, the College will pay both the employee and employer portion of the health insurance premiums;
- Available, unused vacation, sick and personal leave balances, if in a leave-accruing position;
- During the period of the furlough, the employee will not accrue any vacation or sick leave if the employee works less than half of the days in a month, if in a leave-accruing position;

- Ability to continue to participate in currently enrolled voluntary benefits, provided that the employee makes arrangements for payment of such premiums; and
- Pause of any probationary period or disciplinary period during the pendency of the furlough.

Any employee who is in approved voluntary unpaid furlough status will be eligible to apply for unemployment benefits. The College will not contest the claim of any approved participant in the Voluntary Furlough Program for unemployment compensation during the furlough period. Eligibility for and the amount of unemployment benefits are determined by the State of New York. Neither the College nor the union has any control or input into whether this benefit will remain available through the duration of your furlough.

Decisions regarding the Voluntary Furlough Program are final and are not subject to the grievance procedure.