COVID-19 Specific Accommodations

As part of the institutional response to COVID-19, the University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) is committed to supporting employees and their immediate family members who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention, this generally applies to people 65 years and older and people with underlying medical conditions. COVID-19 specific workplace accommodation requests will be considered for this group by Employment Services and Operations (ESO) Benefits team. In addition to these high risk factors, ESO will also consider COVID-19 specific accommodation requests for employees with issues accessing childcare. COVID-19 specific accommodation requests are for 30 days. Employees wishing an extension of the COVID-19 specific accommodation request must reapply.

For purposes relating to COVID-19 specific accommodations, immediate family is defined as those individuals who reside in the same household and are related by kinship, adoption, or marriage, as well as foster children certified by the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services.

Higher Risk for Severe Illness from COVID-19 Accommodation Requests

When a COVID-19 specific workplace accommodation is requested by an employee on the basis of higher risk for severe illness from exposure to COVID-19 for himself/herself or family member, ESO will:

- Require employee submit COVID-19 Specific Accommodation form to benefits@uhd.edu.
- Require employee provide the required supporting documentation. This will include one or more of the following:
  - Medical documentation of underlying condition
  - Proof of age for the immediate family member who is the basis for the accommodation request
- Collaborate with the employee’s supervisor to explore options for alternative work assignments such as telework, schedule change, reassignment, or social distancing measures.
- Where alternative work assignments are not possible, advise the employee of other available options for which he/she may qualify, such as, EPSL, FMLA, ADA and/or use of their accrued paid time off.

Childcare Access Accommodation Requests

When a COVID-19 specific workplace accommodation is requested by an employee on the basis of childcare issues, ESO will:

- Require employee submit COVID-19 Specific Accommodation form to benefits@uhd.edu.
- Require employee submit a statement outlining their childcare issues and the expected duration of these issues.
- Collaborate with the employee’s supervisor to explore options for alternative work assignments such as telework or schedule change.
• Where alternative work assignments are not possible, advise the employee of other available options for which he/she may qualify, such as, EPSL, EFMLEA, FMLA, ADA and/or use of their accrued paid time off.

Process for Accommodation Requests

Employees whose duties require them to work on-site in close contact with others are encouraged to explore options for telework, schedule change, reassignment and/or physical distancing with their supervisor. If no agreement can be reached, employee may submit the COVID-19 Specific Accommodation Request form to benefits@uhd.edu.

Employees will be required to submit all documentation within five business days prior to the start date of their request or the application will be denied.

While the reasonable accommodation analysis is being conducted, the requested accommodation will be temporarily put in place to protect the employee. ESO will communicate to the employee in writing that the accommodation is being temporarily implemented while the accommodation analysis is being conducted.

If temporary accommodations are not possible during the analysis phase, leave of absence options for the employee will be explored.

Alternate Accommodations

ESO will direct employees requesting accommodations that are not COVID-19 specific to the appropriate workplace accommodation process, such as EPSL, EFMLEA or ADA. To request an accommodation under EPSL or EFMLEA, employees must complete the Emergency Paid Leave and Emergency FMLEA Form. Employees wishing to apply under the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) must complete the Request for Workplace Accommodation Form. Medical accommodations also require a physician to complete the Medical Inquiry Form.