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## NAVIGATING THE NUANCES OF THE FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT



## THE NEW & COMPLEX WORLD OF LEAVE

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With the coronavirus outbreak, human resources departments are navigating the unknown. New regulations for leave have added a layer of complexity, forcing HR managers to toggle between making strategic decisions and being compliant with absence management.

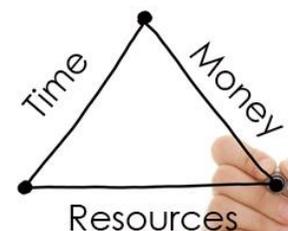
Newly enacted state and federal laws aim to create safe workplaces while taking care of employees impacted by COVID-19. Some of these regulations expand on infected and quarantined workers, as well as employees with childcare needs due to school and daycare closures.

For example, the **Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA)** applies to employers with fewer than 500 employees.

Under this rule:

- Employers are required to provide staffers with **two weeks of paid sick leave** for those unable to work because of COVID-19.
- If an employee has a qualifying childcare need related to the pandemic, that leave can grow to **12 weeks** with the expansion of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
- Employers that provide these benefits are entitled to **tax credits to cover the costs** of paying for FFCRA.

There are many more nuances to FFCRA and there are other state mandated regulations as well. Each of these are being updated often. As a result, leave management has begun to drain time and resources.



## FACING THE TOUGH QUESTIONS

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HR experts like you are faced with a multitude of questions from employees. Each question requires a thoughtful answer, tailored to each employee.

Some common **employee** questions include:

- I have been exposed to a COVID-19 patient. Am I eligible for paid leave?
- What benefits can I use?
- Is childcare considered a qualifying event?
- What is the maximum pay I can receive under the rules?

Then, there are questions that **you** are likely to have:

- Will short-term disability and other paid leaves apply to the quarantine?
- My employee has tested positive for COVID-19. How do I manage leave?
- What leaves are available for employees with school-age kids at home?
- Should we be thinking of workers' compensation?

Add in compliance and paid leave administration becomes a far thornier issue than you expected. Not only do HR departments like yours have to keep tabs on new rules, you need to execute them, ensure your employees are eligible and then follow through with carriers, employees and the organization as a whole.



## PARTNER WITH EXPERTISE

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In situations such as these, an experienced third-party administrator could be a useful extension of your HR department. TPAs like HR Works can integrate your programs with end-to-end absence management.

This will lighten your load by:

- Taking care of leave-related paperwork,
- Establishing a consistent process by tracking leaves, and
- Maintaining compliance with regulations.

These administrators often rely on a deep bench of expertise so that you don't have to spend time figuring out the details. Employees, wary about disclosing health issues directly to an employer, might be more comfortable speaking about them to a third party.

A reputable third-party administrator will maintain an open line of communication with your HR department, updating you along the way of leave applications, new regulations and other pertinent matters. When implemented carefully, outsourcing leave management can help you manage and streamline the administration process.

If you think TPAs are only for organizations with big budgets, think again. A flexible third-party administrator will align with your organization to make sure that services fit your budget and can scale to meet your growing needs.

Get some peace of mind, save time and resources and return to the strategy table where you belong.

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