



Emergency Paid Sick Time

COVID-19 Protection for Working People

In order to ensure that all those who feel sick or may have been exposed to COVID-19 stay home and avoid exposing others to the virus, **all workers must have the ability to miss work to care for themselves or their family, without losing the pay they need to make ends meet.**

Low-wage workers are our first line of defense against COVID-19, but they are feeling the greatest economic impact of the outbreak. Healthcare and long-term care workers, janitorial workers, food service workers, child care workers, municipal workers, adjunct faculty, gig workers, and others on the front lines are critical to supporting our communities during the outbreak. Women, people of color, and immigrants are all overrepresented in frontline occupations and industries.

But **many front-line workers are struggling economically and lack basic economic protections including adequate paid sick time.** Massachusetts' Earned Sick Time law, passed by the voters in 2014, provides 40 hours of paid sick time yearly, but that sick time must be accumulated over time, and for thousands of workers this isn't enough to meet the scale and impact of this public health crisis. The federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) provided 10 days of additional paid sick time for many workers last year, but it had big coverage gaps that left millions of front-line workers without paid sick time, including workers at companies with more than 500 employees, and many employees of health care and residential facilities.

Now, the situation has gotten worse: **the FFCRA's paid sick time protections expired at the end of December, leaving all Massachusetts workers without access to emergency paid sick time benefits if they contract or are exposed to COVID-19.** Massachusetts's new paid family and medical leave program has a one-week waiting period to receive wage replacement benefits, which means it will not help lower-income workers who cannot afford to miss an entire week of pay to isolate or quarantine. **Massachusetts workers need emergency paid sick time now.**

No worker should face a choice between going to work sick or losing the pay they desperately need to make ends meet.

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(HD.531 - Rep. Donato / SD.386 - Sen. Lewis)

Massachusetts will not be able to safely reopen our economy if tens of thousands of workers feel the need to go to work even when they might be sick. To protect the public health of our communities, Massachusetts needs to pass Emergency Paid Sick Time legislation to ensure that all workers can take paid sick time during this crisis.

Our Emergency Paid Sick Time legislation would provide **ten additional work-days (80 hours) of job-protected paid sick time** for immediate use during the COVID-19 outbreak. This Emergency Paid Sick Time would be available to employees not covered by federal paid sick time provisions.

Workers taking Emergency Paid Sick Time would be paid by their employers at their regular rate of pay, up to a maximum of \$850/week. Employers would then be fully reimbursed by the state. The legislation creates a COVID-19 emergency paid leave time fund with an initial deposit of \$55 million.

Emergency Paid Sick Time would be available, with no waiting period, for use:

- a) **For a worker to care for themselves** if they are diagnosed with COVID-19, experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and awaiting a diagnosis, quarantined or self-quarantined, or reasonably believes their health is at risk; or
- b) **For a worker to take care of a family member**, including a domestic partner or someone with whom the worker resides, who is diagnosed with COVID-19, experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and awaiting a diagnosis, quarantined or self-quarantined, or reasonably believes their health is at risk.

Visit raiseupma.org/EmergencyPST to learn more and take action!

About Raise Up Massachusetts

Raise Up Massachusetts is a coalition of community organizations, faith-based groups, and labor unions committed to building an economy that invests in families, gives everyone the opportunity to succeed, and creates broadly shared prosperity. Since our coalition came together in 2013, we have nearly doubled wages for hundreds of thousands of working people by winning two increases in the state's minimum wage, won best-in-the-nation earned sick time and paid family and medical leave benefits for workers and their families, led the campaign for the Fair Share Amendment to invest in transportation and public education, and started to build an economy that works for all of us, not just those at the top. Learn more at raiseupma.org.