

2018 November Newsletter

Update on Paid Sick Leave- On November 16th, the Austin-based 3rd Court of Appeals declared Austin's paid sick leave ordinance as unconstitutional saying the ordinance is preempted by the state's minimum wage law. In the opinion, it was stated "the effective result is that employees who take sick leave are paid the same wage for fewer hours worked." Austin's paid sick leave was scheduled to become effective in October. San Antonio passed a sick leave ordinance to become effective in August 2019, and business leaders were watching the Austin case closely. While Dallas does not have a paid sick leave ordinance, recently there was a petition to add to the proposition to the ballot. The proposition was short of the number of signatures needed. **Stay Tuned!**

Mid-Term Elections- The mid-term elections are over, along with the candidate mailings and phone calls! According to SHRM, the following items are at the top of the list for employment;

- Educational Assistance – The expansion of tax-free educational assistance is important in addressing the skills gap and developing the workforce, as well as expanding the ability to reimburse student loan payments to help graduates with their debt.
- Paid Leave – While many states have passed paid sick leave mandates, there is no federal mandate. Proposals for social programs for paid family leave may be on the agenda but could face significant hurdles in the Senate.
- Workplace Immigration – Greater visa enforcement and regulations restricting visa usability will continue to be an issue.
- Workplace Equity – Gender equity, limiting the use of arbitration and nondisclosure agreements follow the #metoo movement and will continue to be reviewed.

Holiday Season – With the holiday season approaching, listed below are our annual reminder about guidelines for your holiday party. As the planning begins, keep in mind the suggestions below to limit your liability;

- Consider having your holiday party at a place that involves an activity such as bowling, or Escape rooms. Employees can then focus on the activity, instead of drinking.
- Serve food throughout the party; stop serving alcohol one hour before the party ends. Provide plenty of nonalcoholic beverages.
- Hire a professional bartender that are trained to recognize if an employee or guest has had too much to drink.
- Ask managers to be on the lookout if an employee or guest appears intoxicated and arrange transportation for them.

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Flu Shots – In the 2017-2018 flu season, an estimated 80,000 deaths were caused by the flu and complications from the flu. Remind employees about the benefits of a flu shot and if they are sick, to stay home. Many employees are so dedicated to their work, they don't want to miss time. But it is to everyone's benefit for them to stay home until they have recuperated.

2019 Limits – The 2019 benefit limits have been announced.

Benefit	2019	2018
Health Flexible Spending Account	\$2,700	\$2,650
Dependent Flexible Spending Account	\$2,500	\$2,500
Qualified Transportation Benefits	\$265	\$260
HSA Contribution Limits for Employee Only	\$3,500	\$3,450
HSA Contribution Limits for Family	\$7,000	\$6,900
HSA Catch-up	\$1,000	\$1,000
401(k) Pre-Tax	\$19,000	\$18,500
401(k) Catch-Up	\$6,000	\$6,000

“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.” - John Fitzgerald Kennedy

Year-End tends to be one of the busiest times for Human Resource and Payroll departments. If you need assistance on benefit enrollment, communications, year-end audits or extra help, we are available to help. For questions on any of the above items, or assistance, please contact info@humanresourcesolutionsllc.com

Wishing you and your family a Wonderful Holiday Season!

This newsletter is intended to provide general guidance about recent topics in Human Resources. It is not a legal opinion. For answers to your specific questions, please consult with counsel.