COVID-19: Recommendations for Human Resources Preparation

1. Review collective bargaining agreement and board policy language for guidance in emergency situations. Some contracts will suspend parts of collective bargaining agreements in the event of emergencies.

2. Review emergency action plan for guidance.

3. Meet proactively and often with union/association leadership. Keep labor leadership informed of the current situation and possible changes in district operations. Communicate district plans for various possible situations.

4. Seek guidance from legal counsel and/or other Human Resources district leaders in specific situations.

5. Employers and employees should not prejudice employees because of fear of this new virus. Do not assume that someone of a particular ethnic background is more likely to have the coronavirus.

6. Follow federal, state and local laws, as well as any agency policies and/or collective bargaining agreements provisions, covering family and medical leave entitlements, and confidentiality requirements.

7. Review all applicable guidance from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Centers for Disease Control and World Health Organization. Although OSHA has not announced specific standards covering the coronavirus, it has issued a notice indicating that employers should be aware of general standards to which they may be subject under OSHA.

8. Avoid asking employees questions about any known or suspected medical condition or medical history. In 2009, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission released a notice titled “Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act,” which provides guidance. The notice is available here.

Resources for Employers

How Public Employers Should Respond to Employees’ Exposure To COVID-19

Legal guidance from AALRR

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