Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act (VESSA)

REQUIRED NOTICE FOR EMPLOYERS

VESSA provides employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, gender violence, or any other crime of violence, and employees who have a family or household member who is a victim of such violence, with unpaid, job-guaranteed leave; reasonable accommodations; and protections from discrimination and retaliation.

This time may be used if the employee or the employee's family or household member is:

- Experiencing an incident of domestic violence, sexual violence, gender violence, or any other crime of violence
- Recovering from the violence;
- Seeking or receiving medical help, legal assistance (including participation in legal proceedings), counseling, safety planning, or other assistance;
- Temporarily or permanently relocating;
- Taking other actions to increase the safety of the victim from future domestic, sexual, or gender violence, or any other crime of violence, or to ensure economic security.
- Attending the funeral or alternative to a funeral if death is caused by crime of violence;
- Making arrangements necessitated by a death caused by a crime of violence; or
- Grieving a death caused by a crime of violence.

NOTICE AND CERTIFICATION Employees must provide the employer with at least 48 hours advance notice of the intention to take leave, unless providing advance notice is not practicable. If an employee is unable to provide advance notice, an employee must provide notice when an employee is able to do so, within a reasonable period of time after the absence.

Certification may be provided to the employer by a sworn statement of the employee and other documentation, if the employee has possession, such as the following:

- Documentation from an employee, agent or volunteer of a victim services organization, an attorney, a member of the clergy, or medical or other professional assisting in addressing the violence;
- A police, court, or military record;
- A death certificate, published obituary, or written verification of death, burial, or memorial services, or
- Other corroborating evidence.

AMOUNT OF LEAVE permitted during a 12-month period under the VESSA based on number of employees:

Number of employees	Leave permitted
1-14 employees	4 weeks
15-49 employees	8 weeks
50 or more employees	12 weeks*

Leave may be taken consecutively, intermittently, or on a reduced work schedule basis.

*As of January 1, 2024, employees who have worked at least 1250 hours in the previous 12 months working for employers with 50 or more employees (employees eligible under the Family Bereavement Leave Act, 820 ILCS 154 et seq.) are entitled to 2 additional weeks unpaid leave for certain reasons relating to a family or household member's death due to a crime of violence to be completed within 60 days after the date the employee received notice of the death of the victim.

ACCOMMODATIONS VESSA provides that employees are entitled to reasonable accommodations to address the needs of the victim(s). Accommodations include, but are not limited to, an adjustment to the job structure, workplace facility, work requirements, or telephone number, seating assignment, or physical security of the work area.

DISCRIMINATION AND RETALIATION VESSA prohibits employers from discriminating, retaliating, or otherwise treating an employee or job applicant unfavorably if the individual involved:

- Is or is perceived to be a victim of domestic, sexual, or gender violence, or any other crime of violence;
- Attended, participated in, prepared for, or requested leave to attend, participate in, or prepare for a criminal or civil court or administrative proceeding relating to domestic, sexual, or gender violence, or any other crime of violence;
- Requested or took VESSA leave for any reason;
- Requested an accommodation, regardless of whether the accommodation was granted;
- The workplace is disrupted or threatened by the action of a person whom the individual states has committed or threatened to commit domestic, sexual, or gender violence, or any other crime of violence, against the individual or the individual's family or household member; or
- Exercised any other rights under VESSA.

COMPLAINTS For information on filing a complaint please call: **312-793-6797** or visit **labor.illinois.gov/vessa**

CONFIDENTIALITY Employers must maintain the confidentiality of all information pertaining to the use of VESSA leave pursuant to 820 ILCS 180/30(d).

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