



March 18, 2021

## OFFICERS

SUBJECT: American Rescue Plan Act—Emergency Federal Employee Leave

This memorandum supplements my March 12, 2021, memorandum addressing the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)—Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL).

Following the issuance of that memorandum, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) advised the Postal Service that OPM is not prepared to implement EFEL at this time. OPM is charged with administering the EFEL Fund (Fund) that will finance leave granted under the ARPA and, therefore, is required to issue guidance covering how the leave is to be administered by covered agencies, including the Postal Service. Because of OPM's need to finalize their guidance, the Postal Service is limited in its ability to fully implement EFEL at this time.

Notwithstanding, until such time as OPM finalizes its guidance on the administration of EFEL, the Postal Service will be observing the interim process described in this memorandum. We are continuing to work closely with OPM and hope that it will finalize its official guidance sometime within the next couple of weeks.

Under the interim process, employees may submit requests to use EFEL. However, supervisors and managers are only authorized to conditionally approve such leave requests for periods of up to two weeks: up to 80 hours for full-time employees and a proportional amount for part-time flexible (PTF) and non-career employees who do not have a 40-hour a week schedule. Employees must meet one of the qualifying reasons for the leave as outlined in my March 12, 2021, memorandum and must be unable to work as a result of that qualifying reason. At this time, requests for leave based on the EFEL qualifying reasons for dates after March 31, 2021, should not be approved or denied because we expect the final guidance from OPM to be issued before that date.

You should advise employees that additional requirements, including, but not limited to producing appropriate documentation to support their need for leave, are likely to be imposed once we receive official guidance from OPM. Employees approved for leave on the basis of the EFEL qualifying reasons prior to the Postal Service's implementation of OPM's official guidance, must comply with any such additional requirements to prevent their leave from being converted to a type of the employee's postal leave or leave without pay, as appropriate.

As noted in my March 12 memorandum, employees seeking to use leave for one of the eight qualifying reasons should submit a PS Form 3971 indicating the reason they must take leave, and employees must affirmatively state that they are unable to work because of the qualifying

reason. This leave should be managed and tracked within the Enterprise Resource Management System (eRMS). Timekeepers have been instructed to enter the interim hours code 086-21 in eRMS for all employees who seek and are approved for EFEL and then verify the leave is entered in the appropriate timekeeping system using either hours code 086-21 for City or DACA Code O for Rurals. Hours code 086-21 is now available for use.

We will provide prompt updated guidance as soon as we receive the necessary information from OPM.

Thank you for your continued efforts and support in responding to the ongoing impacts of this pandemic on our employees.



Doug A. Tulino

Effective March 12, 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (Act) provides employees with up to 600 hours of paid Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL). This leave is available to employees beginning on March 12, 2021, and continuing through September 30, 2021—or until the funding established in the Emergency Federal Employee Leave Fund (Fund) for reimbursement is exhausted. The leave is available to eligible employees who are unable to work due to one of eight qualifying reasons as summarized in the chart below:

Emergency Federal Employee Leave	
Qualifying Reasons	Leave Eligibility
<p>An employee is entitled to take EFEL related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work because the employee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19.</li> <li>2. has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine due to concerns related to COVID-19.</li> <li>3. is caring for an individual who is subject to such an order as in (1) or has been so advised as in (2).</li> <li>4. is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and seeking a medical diagnosis.</li> <li>5. is caring for the employee's son or daughter if the school or place of care of the son or daughter has been closed, requires or makes optional a virtual learning instruction model, requires or makes optional a hybrid of in-person and virtual learning instruction models, or if the child care provider of the son or daughter is unavailable, due to COVID-19 precautions.</li> <li>6. is experiencing any other substantially similar condition.</li> <li>7. is caring for a family member with a mental or physical disability or who is 55 years of age or older and incapable of self-care, without regard to whether another individual other than the employee is available to care for such family member, if the place of care for such family member is closed or the direct care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19.</li> <li>8. is obtaining immunization (vaccination) related to COVID-19 or is recovering from any injury, disability, illness, or condition related to such immunization.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All career and non-career employees, regardless of tenure, are immediately eligible for EFEL.</li> <li>• <b>Full-time Employees</b> can receive up to 600 hours of paid EFEL, capped at \$2,800 per pay period.</li> <li>• <b>Part-time Employees</b> can receive up to the proportional equivalent of 600 hours, capped at a proportional equivalent of \$2,800 per pay period.</li> </ul>
	<p>Other Considerations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EFEL does not count as creditable service toward an employee's retirement benefits.</li> <li>• Employees cannot contribute to Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) while on EFEL.</li> </ul>

As a reminder, the Postal Service provides an essential federal government service as part of the nation's critical infrastructure. Therefore, postal employees are generally not subject to Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation orders related to COVID-19, so employees will generally not be eligible to use EFEL for qualifying reason (1) above. Additionally, no substantially similar condition has been identified that would qualify an employee to use leave for qualifying reason (6) above.

We are continuing to work the issues associated with implementation of these new leave requirements, and we anticipate receiving additional guidance from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which will administer the Fund, in the coming weeks. In the interim, employees seeking to use EFEL should submit a PS Form 3971 indicating for which of the eight qualifying reasons they must take leave, and employees must affirmatively state that they are unable to work because of the qualifying reason.

For now, this leave should be managed and tracked within the Enterprise Resource Management System (eRMS). Timekeepers will be instructed to enter the interim hours code 086-21 in eRMS for all employees, and then verify the Administrative Leave is entered in the appropriate timekeeping system using either hours code 086-21 for City or DACA Code O for Rurals. For immediate reference, attached is the timekeeping quick reference table.

We will update you with additional instructions and guidance as our processes for managing this new leave are developed and implemented. We ask that you share this information with your teams as soon as possible, given that this leave will become available on March 12.

Emergency Federal Employee Leave (EFEL)				
Employee Type	eRMS Leave Code/Reason Code	Timekeeping System (RMSS/TACS)	Description	Comments
Rural Carrier	086-21	DACA O - for 1314A use OL block	Pandemic Relief 2021	Used when requested for scenarios 1-8 of EFEL, up to \$2,800.00 per Pay Period
All Other	086-21	086-21	Pandemic Relief 2021	Used when requested for scenarios 1-8 of EFEL, up to \$2,800.00 per Pay Period
UPDATED 3/11/2021				