



Human Resources Updates

**UNC System Staff Assembly
October 19-20, 2026
Appalachian State University**

Follow-up on Effective Communication

1. Partnership
2. Alignment with the UNC System's Strategic Plan
3. Shared Goals or Objectives

Consider:

September short-form meeting presentation from Dr. Christie Poteet at UNC Pembroke: "From Staff Expertise to Strategic Influence"

- *Dr. Poteet emphasized the importance of staff using their institutional knowledge to communicate effectively with senior leadership. She shared strategies for framing issues around institutional priorities, using data and evidence, presenting solutions, making clear requests, and communicating with confidence while navigating questions, pushback, and professional disagreement.*

Dr. Toby King's presentation from yesterday on effective advisory group coordination.

- *Dr. King noted that Faculty Assembly learned that more can be achieved by fostering relationships with System leaders and working to identify shared goals that achieve mutually beneficial objectives. Partnerships working toward common goals will yield better results than lists of complaints and to-do lists. Identify areas of interest that are impactful across the System rather than being focused on individual campus experiences.*

Items for Discussion

- Open Enrollment for 2027 Benefits
- GS 126 Rewrite / GS 126A and State-level policy changes
- Adverse Weather Policy Review

2027 Open Enrollment

✓ **EXTENDED BY 1 WEEK: Oct. 12 – Nov. 6**

State Health Plan Medical Benefit

SALARY BAND	2026 STANDARD PPO Premiums	2027 STANDARD PPO Premiums	2026 PLUS PPO Premiums	2027 PLUS PPO Premiums
\$50,000 + UNDER	\$35.00	\$36.76	\$66.00	\$69.32
\$50,001 - \$65,000	\$50.00	\$52.52	\$94.00	\$98.72
\$65,001 - \$90,000	\$65.00	\$68.28	\$122.00	\$128.12
\$90,001 + OVER	\$80.00	\$84.00	\$160.00	\$168.04

Monthly / Annual Change	Individual Coverage	
	LOWEST	HIGHEST
Change in Monthly Premium Cost		
Active Employee	\$1.76	\$8.04
Change in Annual Premium Cost		
Active Employee	\$21.12	\$96.48

- SHP monthly cost/premium increase
 - Employee & Employer
 - Avg. \$4 increase in premiums per month
 - Employer-paid portion increase from \$742.04 to \$745.44/month
- SHP change to 4-tier structure
 - Preferred / Access / Non-Preferred / Out-of-Network
- SHP plan design changes
 - Deductibles, Out-of-Pocket, co-pays, etc.
- Cost Savings Reminder:
 - Lantern Surgical Benefit

OPEN ENROLLMENT & BENEFITS UPDATES

NCFLEX – Supplemental Health Benefits

*Re-enrollment only required with FSA plans.
Other plans can continue at 2026 election levels.*

Health Care FSA 2027 Limit:

\$3400 per employee

\$680 max rollover into 2028

Dependent Daycare FSA 2027 Limit:

\$7500 per household

No Change:

NCFLEX Dental, Vision, Accident, Cancer, and
Tricare Supplement premiums



OPEN ENROLLMENT & BENEFITS UPDATES

UNC – Income Protection and Legal Plans

- UNC Voluntary employee life insurance (w/ matching AD&D rider) cost reduction
 - *EOI required for new enrollments*
- UNC Voluntary AD&D plans cost reduction (all)
 - *No EOI*
- UNC Legal (no change)
- UNC Supplemental Disability
 - Lincoln Financial (TSERS participants)
 - *No EOI new enrollments*
 - The Standard (ORP participants)
 - *EOI required for new enrollments*

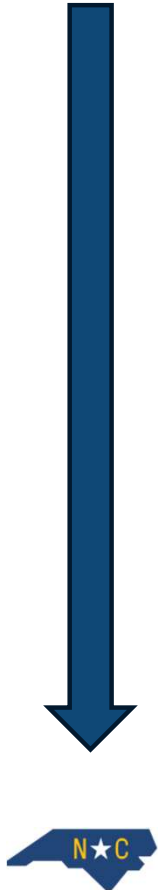


QUESTIONS?

SB 1041, 126A, and OSHR policy: why these changes matter

Goal: To attract, retain, develop, and motivate a high-performing, diverse workforce.

Problem	Solution
According to a recent ‘best states to work in’ report ¹ from Oxfam, North Carolina ranks last among the 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico.	While methodological approaches to these reports differ, and North Carolina may rank vastly differently elsewhere, the state needs to continue to take an active role in improving its national and global image.
North Carolina’s human resource policy for state employees was established in 1965, making large, impactful revisions difficult.	The General Assembly passed SB 1041, which repeals and replaces (in IT terms, “overwrites”) Section 126 of the state code, the ‘North Carolina Human Resources Act,’ with 126a.
Office of State Human Resources (OSHR) wants to increase retention throughout the state agencies.	• Increasing paid parental leave • Expanding access to bereavement leave • Expanding vacation leave • Establishing experiential programs • Expanding veterans' preference • Reducing and combining language to make policy more digestible • Using simpler language to increase policy transparency And many more changes, with OSHR overall empowering each state agency—including the UNC System—to promulgate these policies to best fit their individual needs.



¹[Oxfam Best States to Work in the U.S. 2026](#)

GS 126 → GS 126A

What you need to know

Effective October 1, 2026, NC General Statutes Chapter 126 (State Human Resources Act) is repealed, and NCGS Chapter 126A (Public Workforce Modernization Act) is enacted.

What this means:

- All **OSHR policies** under Chapter 126 will change, and/or their **numbering** will change.
 - *All UNC Policy Manual or Institution-level policies/regulations that reference GS 126 must be amended.*
- Policies related to **employee leave** have seen major changes, including paid parental leave, bereavement, and vacation.
 - OSHR has combined 17 different leave policies into one condensed policy.
 - Generally, UNC EHRA employees follow the same leave provisions as SHRA employees
- New **appointment types** and **career statuses** are being introduced, and **experiential programs** are being expanded across the state.
 - *Impact to UNC System institutions and employees remains in discussion.*
- Policies related to **Veteran's preference, personnel records, I-9 / E-Verify**, and the **State Human Resources Commission** itself are also updated.

LEAVE PROGRAM UPDATES

State OSHR Leave Policies

Policies Combined:

1. Bereavement Leave
2. Bonus Leave Administration
3. Civil Leave & Job-Related Proceedings
4. Community Service Leave (CSL)
5. CSL - Literacy, Tutoring, Mentoring
6. Compensatory Time
7. Educational Leave
8. General Leave - Leave Offsetting
9. Holidays
10. Incentive Leave
11. Leave Without Pay
12. Other Mgmt Approved Leave (OMAL)
13. Paid Parental Leave
14. Personal Observance Leave
15. Sick Leave
16. Transfer Leave
17. Vacation Leave

Policies Remaining Separate:

- Adverse Weather
- Emergency Closing
- Family Medical Leave (FML)*
- FML - Military Caregiver*
- FML - Qualifying Exigency*
- Family Illness Leave*
- Military Leave
- Voluntary Shared Leave

** To be considered for future combination.*

Updates to Leave: Paid Parental Leave



Under Consideration: Whether to permit splitting of PPL into segments or permit only continuous block of up to 12 weeks.

- Expands PPL to 12 weeks of paid leave for all
 - No separation of bonding vs. recuperation
 - No difference for birthing vs. non-birthing parent
- Applicable to ALL permanent SHRA and EHRA employees
 - Part-time employees prorated
- Applies to qualifying events on or after Oct. 1, 2026
 - Parents of children born/adopted before October 1st, but whose paid parental leave would include October, are NOT grandfathered into this new change, and would NOT receive 12 weeks of Paid Parental Leave
- No changes to PPL related to miscarriage, stillbirth
 - 4 weeks / 160 hours recuperative
 - Only applies to birthing parent
- Clarified access to other leave before and after Paid Parental Leave

Updates to Leave: Bereavement Leave

- No change to leave amounts already in place
 - Up to 8 hrs for Colleague; up to 40 hrs for Immediate Family
- Applicable to all permanent SHRA and EHRA employees
 - Full-time as well as part-time working 20 hrs or more
- Per OSHR, there is no limit to use in a year.
 - UNC institutions have the flexibility to create their own case-specific bereavement policies, as well as deny bereavement on a case-by-case basis
- Expands the definitions of:
 - **Colleague** to include an employee at any agency with whom the bereaved employee has worked (current or former)
 - **Immediate family** to include family-equivalent relationships, such as domestic partners or individuals who served in a parent-like capacity



Updates to Leave: SHRA Vacation

Minimum leave for SHRA employees is increased to 120 hours.

- ❑ Leave is increased by at least 8 hours per year for all SHRA employees, not just the lowest leave earners

NEW leave tier is added for SHRA employees with **25+ years** of state service

NEW Advancement of Leave

- ❑ New SHRA employees may be provided 40 hours of their initial 120 hours of annual leave allotment immediately upon hire.

Years of Total State Service	Hours per Month (Days per Year)	
	PREVIOUS	NEW
< 5 years	9 h 20 m (14 days)	10 h (15 days)
5-10 years	11 h 20 m (17 days)	12 h (18 days)
10-15 years	13 h 20 m (20 days)	14 h (21 days)
15-20 years	15 h 20 m (23 days)	16 h (24 days)
20-25 years	17 h 20 m (26 days)	18 h (27 days)
25+ years (new!)		20 h (30 days)

UNC System Leave Programs

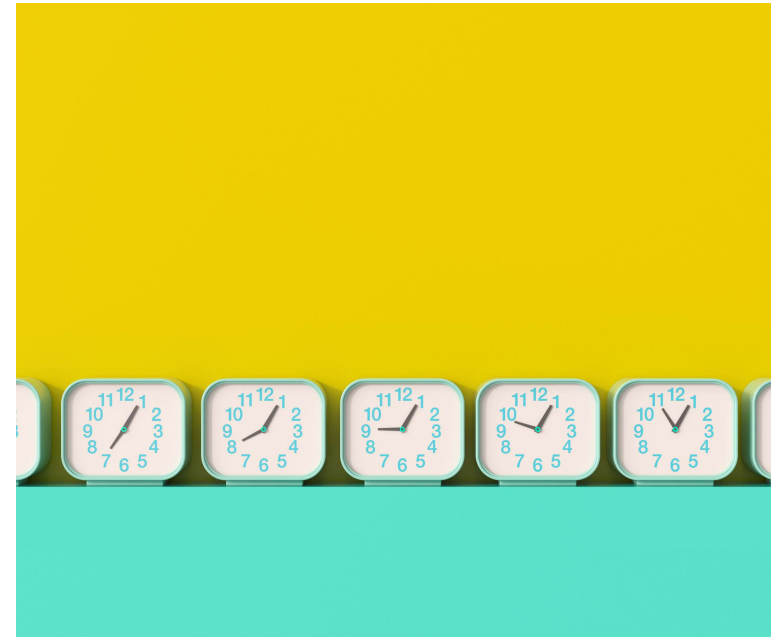
Years of Total State Service	Hours per Month (Days per Year)			
	SHRA (Previous)	SHRA (New)	EHRA ANNUAL LEAVE (Legacy)	EHRA PERSONAL LEAVE PROGRAM
< 5 years	9 h 20 m (14 days)	10 h (15 days)	16 h (24 days)	17 h 20 m (26 days)
5-10 years	11 h 20 m (17 days)	12 h (18 days)		
10-15 years	13 h 20 m (20 days)	14 h (21 days)		
15-20 years	15 h 20 m (23 days)	16 h (24 days)		
20-25 years	17 h 20 m (26 days)	18 h (27 days)		
25+ years (new!)		20 h (30 days)		
Rollover	Up to 240 h	Up to 240 h	Up to 240 h	Up to 160 h
Conversion to Sick	> 240 h Converts	> 240 h Converts	> 240 h Converts	Excess Leave Expires

Advancement of Personal Leave

Change to UNC Policy Manual 300.2.22.1[R]

EHRA Personal Leave Program

- Regulation change in July 2026 for participants in the *Personal Leave Program*
- Up to 80 hours of sick leave *may* be converted to Personal Leave in a year, with supervisor approval
 - *Implementation is at institution discretion*
 - *Year-end limit of 160 rollover hours remains; excess leave expires and does not convert (or return) to sick*
 - *Minimum amounts to convert MAY be enacted*
- Balance of accumulated sick leave must remain at least 480 hours
- If a leave deficit due to advancement of Personal Leave exists at employee termination, accumulated sick is used to balance



Appointment Types and Career Status

NEW OSHR Appointment Types

- **Permanent:**
 - Probationary, Experiential, Career
- **Non-Permanent:**
 - Time-Limited, Experiential, Temporary
- **Exempt**

Experiential Employment

- Experiential programs are programs for both employment and educational or training purposes, such as registered apprenticeships, informal apprenticeships, fellowships, or other work-based learning programs
- Permanent v. Non-Permanent Experiential Programs
 - Permanent Experiential: experiential programs that lead to permanent employment following successful completion of a program
 - Non-Permanent Experiential: experiential programs that *do not* lead to permanent employment following the completion of a program

Employees receive career status by:

- ❖ Completing a 12-month probationary period.
 - **New:** *The supervisor and institution may, at their discretion, extend the probationary period by six months, up to 18 months in total.*
- ❖ Successfully completing a permanent experiential program lasting at least 12 months.
 - If the program lasts less than 12 months, the employee becomes probationary for at least 12 months following successful completion of the program.

Employees retain career status when they:

- ❖ Transfer between SHRA positions within executive branch agencies, including the UNC System;
- ❖ Complete a 12- or 18-month probationary period and then:
 - Transfer to a position requiring a longer probationary period; or
 - Transfer to a permanent experiential program; or
 - Return to a subject position after separation, provided there has not been a break in service of more than 31 days.

Additional Policy Changes

Veterans Preference

- *Active-duty military spouses* will now receive veterans' preference.
- The 'period of war' requirement has been removed from the definition of "veteran."

Personnel Records

- *Employee Age* will no longer be included in publicly-accessible records.

I-9 and E-Verify

- *I-9 and E-Verify* continues to be the primary system for employment verification, with SB 1041 changes primarily impacting Non-University State Agencies.
- *Seasonal employees are treated as "new hires"* for the purposes of verifying employment eligibility.
- *All transfers between Agencies and the UNC System* re-complete I-9 when beginning their new position.

QUESTIONS?

Adverse Weather Policy Analysis

- Explore the System's policies governing emergency closings, as well as those of the 17 institutions
- Identify the requirements for Institutions and the System Office
- Establish best practices and determine if further guidance is needed; investigate ways to more efficiently communicate System-level adverse weather policy requirements, including but not limited to providing new EHRA/SHRA campus guides, simplifying language, and reducing blind spots.

Current State Agency Policies

- ❖ OSHR Policy on Adverse Weather
- ❖ OSHR Policy on Emergency Closings
- **The above *DO NOT APPLY* to UNC System Employees**

Current UNC System Policies

- ❖ UNC System Policy for SHRA Employees on Adverse Weather and Emergency Events, authorized by SHRC ("SHRA Policy")
- ❖ UNC System Policy Manual 300.2.15 and 300.2.19[R] ("EHRA Regulation")

What do institutions need to know? What is *required*?

- The Chancellor, as the President's designee, is authorized to determine mandatory operations and condition levels.
- Landlords do not make the decision to limit or close University operations within leased facilities. (SHRA Policy § VII)
- There are to be three emergency condition levels, with **Condition 3 requiring advance consultation with and the approval of the President** or the President's designee. (SHRA Policy § VI.A-C, VIII.A-C)
 - In practice, Condition 3 is typically applied after the fact.
- Under all condition levels, supervisors are to facilitate at-home or alternative work, where/when feasible and safe. (SHRA Policy § VIII)
- Accounting for missed time varies depending on condition level and is detailed in the SHRA policy. (SHRA Policy § IX & X)
- **INSTITUTIONS MUST:**
 - ❖ **Develop and maintain procedures for notifying employees** when changes in operational status occur. (SHRA Policy § XII)
 - ❖ **Notify employees of their mandatory or non-mandatory status in advance**, in writing or by electronic means. (SHRA Policy § IV & VI)
 - Non-mandatory employees can be "called in" during extreme circumstances. (SHRA Policy § V)
 - ❖ **Report the use of any condition level** to the UNC System Office no later than 48 hours following the end of the event. (SHRA Policy § XIV)

Summary Findings

Solid Practices

- Some institution policies include that updates on Condition levels will be provided by a set time for that day, e.g. 6am the day of
- Provide an event-specific policy document/guidance, e.g. for loss of electricity
- Offer campus-specific trainings on Weather Emergencies for faculty, staff, and students
- Publish and maintain an emergency/weather telephone line
- Provide detailed checklist and timelines for condition decision-making by institution leadership

Room for Improvement

- Some institutions are still referencing outdated/superseded documents
- Several institutions do not acknowledge that the President's involvement is required for Condition 3 declarations
- Clarification may be needed on when the use of leave is required or not required
- SHRA Policy was updated effective Nov. 1, 2025
- EHRA Regulation has not been updated since 2019 and needs consideration to ensure compatibility with current SHRA Policy language

Determining Condition Levels and Impacts

	SHRA Policy	EHRA Regulation
1	Reduced Operations Used when weather or other conditions significantly affect: • Local-area commuting; • Important campus services; or • Efficient functioning of campus buildings and grounds. Operational consideration: The University may allow employees greater flexibility to report late, leave early, or not report to work, based on their personal circumstances.	University Open Nonmandatory operations may be reduced because of limited staffing. • Mandatory employees must report to or remain at work. • All other employees may Report late; Leave early; or Not work. • Employees must promptly inform their supervisor(s) of their decision.

Determining Condition Levels and Impacts

	SHRA Policy	EHRA Regulation
2	Suspended Operations Used when safety risks or logistical challenges are more severe and it is important to limit the number of individuals traveling to or remaining at the University. Factors to consider include: • National Weather Service alerts and warnings; • Road conditions on major thoroughfares; • Law enforcement directives; • Area mass transit status; • Campus utility systems; and • Executive orders from local government officials or the Governor. NOTE: Governor’s “State of Emergency” declaration or a State Highway Patrol advisory to avoid travel does not automatically require suspended operations, but may inform the University’s decision.	Suspended Operations The University remains open on a very limited basis. • All operations except mandatory operations are suspended. • Employees designated or temporarily assigned as mandatory must report to work, as directed by their supervisor(s). • All other employees must not report to work or must leave the workplace when the condition takes effect.

Determining Condition Levels and Impacts

	SHRA Policy	EHRA Regulation
3	Closure Limited to events presenting the most severe health and safety risks or the greatest logistical challenges. Emergency or weather conditions that severely impede the University's effective functioning. Factors to consider include: • Substantial numbers of downed trees and/or power lines; • Uncontrolled flooding across a substantial portion of the local commuting area; • Unusual accumulations of snow, ice, or water that threaten building stability or safety; or • Loss of utilities, i.e. power, heat/cooling, water, or life-safety systems. When critical utilities are lost, the expected duration of the outage and the feasibility of alternate work sites or other logistical arrangements may help determine whether to declare Condition 2 or Condition 3.	Closure University facilities are closed. The closure may apply to the entire University or to specific buildings, depending on the incident. • All or a limited number of mandatory employees may be directed to remain at or report to work. • All other employees may not report to or remain at work. • This includes employees who are otherwise designated as mandatory but are not needed for the particular event.

What the SHRA policy and EHRA regulation provide:

	SHRA Policy	EHRA Regulation
<i>Expectations of Mandatory Employees</i>	Mandatory employees are expected to report to or remain at work during adverse weather and emergency events and, if deemed necessary, to work a differing schedule or shift than normally assigned. When required to report to work during these events, the employee is expected to use sound judgment with respect to maintaining personal safety given their individual circumstances, but to also make a substantial and good faith effort to reach the work site in a timely manner.	
<i>“Calling In” Non-Mandatory Employees</i>	The University may take the unusual measure of “calling-in” employees who are not normally designated as “mandatory” and temporarily assign them to this status, if a specific adverse weather or emergency event is critical enough to require it.	
<i>Performance Management Considerations for Employees</i>	A mandatory employee who is unable to report to work or remain at work during adverse weather or emergency events <i>on a repeat basis</i> may be subject to disciplinary action for unsatisfactory job performance. A sustained inability to meet obligations for mandatory reporting during adverse weather or emergency events may subject an employee to more significant disciplinary action, up to and including termination. A non-mandatory employee who physically reports to work in Condition 2 (Suspended Operations) or Condition 3 (Closure) in violation of management directives may be subject to disciplinary action for unacceptable personal conduct.	
<i>Cancellation of Classes</i>	The Chancellor’s determination to cancel classes is a separate decision from the Chancellor’s authority to declare condition levels . These condition levels may be declared for the entirety of a campus or for one or more specific buildings or operational units based on the scope, severity, and nature of the event.	Chancellors, or their designees, may make determinations to hold or cancel classes or other academic programming independent of the condition levels included here but are encouraged to use these condition levels as key markers for their decision-making.

What the SHRA policy and EHRA regulation provide:

	SHRA Policy	EHRA Regulation
Requirements for Condition 3 Declaration	Declaring Condition 3 (Closure) requires advance consultation with and approval of the President or President's designee.	If Condition 3 is warranted and approved by the president or president's designee, then the institution may apply the Condition 3 paid leave provision retroactively. This approach is intended both to limit the potential of having to reverse a declaration of a Condition 3 event after the fact to comply with state requirements and to ensure reasonable consistency among constituent institutions that experience similar conditions.
At-Home Work Facilitation	Under all Condition levels, supervisors shall facilitate at-home work or alternate work sites <i>whenever feasible and safe</i> . Even so, <i>such arrangements may not be practicable</i> for all types of employees or during every type of adverse weather or emergency event.	
University Operational Status Communication	Chancellors for the constituent institutions, or their designees, shall be responsible for developing and maintaining procedures for notifying employees when changes in University operational status are in effect. These procedures will also detail the University's expectations for remaining at work, reporting to work, or accounting for missed time from work. <i>There shall also be a communication plan for how students, clients, customers, patients, and the general public are notified of changes in University operational status due to adverse weather or other emergency events.</i>	
Reporting Requirements	Any constituent institution that declares any of the three condition levels set forth in policy for adverse weather or emergency events, either for the entirety of the campus or any individual building or locations, shall formally report this event on the prescribed form(s) to UNC System Human Resources no later than forty-eight (48) hours following the end of the event. UNC System Office shall report this information regarding any constituent institution, or regarding its own operations, in summary form to the Director of State Human Resources no later than seven (7) business days following the end of the event.	

Accounting for Missed Time

Cond 1	• The University remains open, but certain non-mandatory operations may be reduced due to more limited staffing. Mandatory employees must report to or remain at work. • All other employees have the option to report late, leave early, or not work at all; however, the employee is responsible for informing his/her supervisor(s) in a timely manner of all such decisions. • Employees must code available leave for any work time missed during a Condition 1 event, unless the supervisor authorized off-site work arrangements or the Governor issues an Executive Order permitting leave with pay for any missed work time.
Cond 2	• The University remains open on a very limited basis, but has formally suspended all but mandatory operations due to minimal staffing levels. Employees designated or temporarily assigned as mandatory must report to work as directed; all other employees may not report to work or must leave the workplace. • Employees must code available leave for any work time missed during a Condition 2 event, unless the supervisor authorized off-site work arrangements or the Governor issues an Executive Order permitting leave with pay for any missed work time.
Cond 3	• Due to significant and sustained emergency conditions, University facilities are closed; this can apply to the entirety of the university or one or more specific buildings based on the type of incident involved. All or only a limited number of mandatory employees may be directed to remain at or report to work under this condition. • All other employees, including those who are otherwise designated as mandatory but not needed for the particular event, are not permitted to report to or remain at work. • Employees shall not be required to charge leave or make-up any work time missed during a Condition 3 event, unless the duration of the event necessitates a differing decision by direction of the President or by Executive Order of the Governor.

Accounting for Time during Declared Condition Levels

Missed work time is accounted for in this order:

1. Available compensatory time
2. Available annual and/or bonus leave
3. Leave without pay (LWOP)

Institutional option: Institutions may allow employees to make up missed time instead of using LWOP or paid leave. *Make-up time must be completed within 90 days.*

Separation or transfer: If an employee transfers or separates from employment, any missed time will be charged to annual or bonus leave and then deducted from the employee's final paycheck.

Nonmandatory Teleworkers

- Nonmandatory teleworkers are expected to continue teleworking, if possible, when on-site employees are directed to leave or not report because of Cond. 1 or 2.
- Employees who can telework but are scheduled to report to an on-site duty station—and cannot do so because of Condition 1 or 2—are expected to telework to the extent possible.
- Employees who can telework but choose not to do so must account for the lost time using available leave.

Employees Already on Approved Leave: Regardless of the declared condition, employees who are already on approved leave must charge the time to sick, annual, compensatory, or bonus leave. LWOP and make-up time are not available in this circumstance.

Equivalent Time Off (ETO) for Mandatory Employees

Eligibility

- FLSA-exempt mandatory employees are not eligible for ETO.
- **FLSA Non-exempt mandatory employees** who are required to report to or remain at the work site during **Condition 2 or 3** will receive ETO on an hour-for-hour basis.

ETO Requirements

- ETO is in addition to, and does not replace, any required FLSA eligible overtime or comp time for time worked during the event.
- ETO must be used within 18 months.
- Manager approval is required for scheduling ETO. Every reasonable effort should be made to allow employees to use ETO before it expires.
- Unused ETO expires at the end of the 18-month period and is not eligible for payout.

NOT entitled to ETO if the employee:

- Is not required to work but voluntarily chooses to work from home during Condition 2 or 3; or
- Reports to work during Condition 2 or 3 without supervisory permission.

NEXT STEPS

- 1) Recommend technical edits and clarifications to the EHRA regulation governing adverse weather and emergency closings, for the President's consideration**
- 2) Develop guidance documents for institutions to assist in internal policy development and/or case-by-case closure management**

QUESTIONS?

