COVID-19 Related Accommodation Request – Manager Instructions

Accommodations for an individual’s **own health condition**, COVID-19 related or not, will continue to be handled through the university’s standard process, following the guidelines set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendment Act (ADAAA). Any individual with a need for an accommodation for their **own health condition** should follow the process below, or contact Integrated Absence Management and Vocational Services (IAMVS) directly to initiate their request.

**What is a COVID-19 related accommodation?**

Ohio State is preparing to welcome faculty and staff back to campus with new health and wellness protocols developed to help protect the entire Buckeye community. In addition, the Office of Human Resources will work with employees who are most vulnerable to complications from COVID-19, and their supervisors, to ensure that these individuals have the necessary resources to work as safely as possible. Through a COVID-19 accommodation request, which is a secure intake process, individuals will be asked to:

- Identify and attest that their health or other factor place them at greater risk of serious illness if they contract the COVID-19 virus.
- Provide details about their work environment concerns.
- Indicate what needs and resources they feel are necessary to perform their job safely.

**What are the qualifying reasons for requesting COVID-19 related accommodation?**

1. An employee may request an accommodation when they have their own health condition, as defined by the CDC, which puts them at high risk for COVID-19 complications, and the employee’s health care provider has advised that they modify their work environment to reduce COVID-19 exposure. These conditions may include:

   - Age of 65 years and older
   - Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
   - Serious heart conditions
   - Compromised immune system
   - Severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher)
   - Diabetes
   - Chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis
   - Liver disease

2. An employee has a disability or health condition, other than those defined by the CDC, which interacts with COVID-19.

3. An employee lives with or provides regular face-to-face care to a family member who has a health condition which puts them at high-risk for COVID-19 complications, as defined by the CDC, and the family member’s health care provider has advised that the employee modify their work to reduce COVID-19 exposure for that family member.

4. An employee who needs to provide care for their child whose school or child care provider is unavailable due to COVID-19 and there are no other suitable child care options available.

**My employee has requested a COVID-19 related accommodation. What do I do?**

1. Provide your employee with the link to the [COVID Accommodation Request](#) form.

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1 Employee may need to provide additional documentation after the initial request is submitted.
2. Once the form has been completed, HR will review the forms for completeness and send request to either IAMVS (for ADA-related requests) or the supervisor or unit HR business partner (for non-ADA-related requests) for review. Requests sent to the department will be sent via email from the ServiceNow email address with instructions on next steps.

3. Review the request with appropriate internal leadership, and determine if granting the accommodation is feasible or would pose a hardship to the operation of your department. Consider alternatives that may meet the needs of the individual and the department. For example, if the request is to telework to reduce exposure, other alternatives may be:

   - Specifically fitted Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
   - Plexiglass or other shielding
   - Single direction entrances/exits
   - Physical distancing (more than 6 feet)
   - Office hours/meetings in larger room/remote
   - Alternative work schedule (earlier morning or later at night to reduce density)
   - Hybrid schedule (part-time remote work/part time on campus)
   - Additional cleaning/sanitation
   - Workstation re-arrangement
   - Adjusting non-essential job duties (i.e. removing non-essential in person meetings)

5. If the request, or an agreeable alternative can be granted, draft the accommodation plan with the agreed upon modifications. Review and sign the plan with the employee.

6. If the accommodation cannot be granted, due to the impact it would have on business operations, contact your unit’s HR business partner to review and complete the **COVID-19 Accommodation Decision Document**, which supports and documents the operational impact of the request. Discuss any other options that may be available to meet the employees needs without disrupting the business operations and other expectations moving forward.

7. If agreeable alternative accommodation options are available, discuss and document those with the employee via the **COVID-19 Accommodation Plan**.

8. If you and your HR business partner are in agreement that there are no accommodations which would meet the needs of the individual and the operations of the business, advise the employee that the accommodation cannot be implemented and discuss next steps with your HR business partner and Employee and Labor Relations consultant.

9. Return all completed documents (**COVID-19 Accommodation Plans, COVID-19 Accommodation Decision Documents**) back to HR by replying to the ServiceNow email and attaching the documents.

**Examples**

**Example 1:**

**Employee:** Customer service representative

**Request:** Work from home to reduce exposure to COVID-19 due to a family member’s medical condition.

**Department and employee job functions:** The employee’s primary responsibility is taking pictures and preparing security ID cards, as well as activating and handling external security cards. The specialized equipment for picture-taking and activation are onsite and cannot be moved. The department needs to provide photo IDs six days a week, 12 hours per day, and it has two staff members who can perform these job functions. The impact of not having a staff member onsite to provide security ID’s would impact student and staff ability to enter their secure work locations and cause security concerns for employees without verified ID.

**Outcome:** The department determines that they cannot have the employee work from home due to the onsite nature of their job duties and inability to fill in with other employees with the same skill set. After discussion with the employee, the
department has identified that in addition to the standard safety precautions (e.g., physical distancing, mandatory masks), a plexiglass shield around the workstation and camera set up, a closed hand-off trough and disposable gloves will help reduce the risk of exposure.

**Documentation:** Signed accommodation plan outlining the safety precautions

**Example 2:**

**Employee:** Pharmacist

**Request:** Work from home due to COVID-19 child care issues

**Department and employee job functions:** Review and fill medication orders (90%), verify medication interactions (5%), counsel patients on medication related questions (5%). There are always two pharmacists onsite at the same time to cover breaks, lunches and peak hours, and the department operates 24 hours per day, seven days per week. There are nine pharmacists, including a part time “float.” Medications cannot be taken offsite to be filled, and 90% of the job duties are filling medication orders, so the department determines that there is not a way to have the employee complete his job duties from home. The impact of not having the employee available onsite would be delay in medication fill times (and patient dissatisfaction or delayed treatment), and lack of coverage for mandatory breaks and lunches.

**Outcome:** The department determines that they cannot have the employee work from home due to the onsite nature of the job duties. Because the request is related to child care, additional safety precautions are not an option. The supervisor discusses additional options with the HR business partner (e.g., personal leave, separation) and documents the above information. Advise the employees of the outcome.

**Documentation:** Accommodation decision document.

**Example 3:**

**Employee:** IT desktop support representative

**Request:** Work remotely three days per week to reduce the risk of exposure due to a family member’s health condition.

**Department and employee job functions:** Provide desktop support to employees across the university. Respond to help tickets, monitor the help desk phone line, install hardware for new hires and computer updates.

**Outcome:** The department determines that the employee can staff the “help desk phone lines” three days per week (as they normally do) and provide onsite installation and new hire support two days per week on site. There are 12 IT desktop support representatives who rotate between the duties and usually only require one to two days per week for onsite hardware support.

**Documentation:** Signed accommodation plan outlining the work from home schedule.