**CHART Virtual Training Forum (VTF) – Notes on Best Practices**

*Note: Updated information and resources gathered since these VTF notes were taken can be found on* [*CHART’s COVID-19 Resource Page*](https://www.chart.org/training-tools-and-resources/covid-19-resources.html)

**Furloughs & Layoffs - Addressing Unemployment and Insurance**

Monday, March 30, 2020

**Helping Employees Apply for Unemployment**

* One of the best things you can do for employees is help walk them through the process. It is complicated and common mistakes that you can help them avoid. Very hard to help them one by one when you are not in the same room with them.
* Webinars or virtual meetings are great because you can share your screen and walk several of them though it at the same time, answering questions that many of them have, saving everyone time. Do presentation and then have Q&A
* Very state specific, so connect with others in your state for help
* People were denied first time due to technical issues
* Weird issues to be aware of:
  + Don’t put Sunday as last day of work or it will come up as zero benefit (week runs Sunday to Saturday)
  + Even if furloughed, when apply, have to say “laid off”
  + Do not answer “yes” to the question “Are you still attached to your company with reduced hours”? Even though furloughed, they are really laid off.
* Note that now people can get unemployment the first week they are unemployed
* Some chose layoffs instead of reduction in hours so that employees could get unemployment, but note that people can apply for underemployment benefits as well – you need to figure out what will help employees the most
* One member went through the process herself and took screen shots of each page to walk employees through it visually. And she shared them with us! See screen shots attached to these notes. *(Thanks Harmony!)*

**Assistance Programs**

* Assistance programs - Gathering Info on assistance programs and sending it to employees (see [CHART COVID-19 page](https://www.chart.org/training-tools-and-resources/covid-19-resources.html) for a list of some programs)
* ***FMLA – beginning 2020 could start applying for FMLA benefits. Way more claims came in than was anticipated so may be slow.***
* Job Board – send employees lists of who is hiring locally. Although there is a chance that you may not get some of these employees back when you re-open, the benefit is worth the risk
* Advice on creditors – Let employees know they can contact landlord or bank about postponing rent and mortgage payments, reach out to creditors, etc.
* Let them know how to apply for CARE Act payments. Note: Some expressed concern that some employees will make enough income on unemployment and CARE Act pay-outs through July that they will not come back to work right away when they re-open.