

**BERNALILLO COUNTY**

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**ORDINANCE NO. 2019-17**

**1 MANDATING EMPLOYER PAID TIME OFF TO EMPLOYEES WITHIN  
2 BERNALILLO COUNTY; PRESCRIBING RULES AND PENALTIES; SETTING AN  
3 EFFECTIVE DATE**

4  
5 WHEREAS, all workers at some time during each year need limited time off from work to  
6 take care of their own health needs or those of family members; and  
7

8 WHEREAS, according to analysis of paid sick leave in Albuquerque by the University of  
9 New Mexico’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research:

- 10 • Employees least likely to have the right to earn sick time are part-time workers, those  
11 earning less than \$15,000/year and those employed in leisure, hospitality and retail  
12 sectors;  
13 • Bernalillo County lags behind the rest of the country in rates of access to paid sick leave;  
14 • Employees without paid leave go to work sick approximately 3.5 times a year; 1.8 times  
15 with risk of spreading the illness;  
16 • Businesses that do have paid leave experience lower turnover; and  
17

18 WHEREAS, workers in jobs with high public contact, such as health care, services,  
19 restaurant and retail employees, are unlikely to have the right to earn sick time, thereby  
20 increasing their risk of passing illnesses to co-workers and customers; and  
21

22 WHEREAS, the right to earn paid time off, as provided herein, will reduce recovery time  
23 from illnesses, enable people to obtain preventive medical care and prenatal care, promote the  
24 use of regular medical providers rather than emergency care, enable parents to care for sick  
25 children instead of sending them to school, prevent people from spreading illness to the public  
26 and enable victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking to get away from their abusers,  
27 thereby protecting the health, safety and general welfare of people in Bernalillo County; and  
28

29 WHEREAS, victims of domestic abuse, stalking and sexual assault often lose days of paid  
30 employment or lose their jobs because they need time off to escape and recover from such  
31 situations, and that lost income is particularly devastating for such victims, who need economic  
32 security to ensure safety; and  
33

34 WHEREAS, the right to use earned sick time to care for a family member must reflect the  
35 diversity of family caregiving relationships today; and  
36

37 WHEREAS, one in six employees in the U.S. report that they or a family member has been  
38 fired, suspended, punished or threatened by an employer because they needed to take sick time to  
39 care for themselves or a family member; and  
40

**CONTINUATION PAGE 2, ORDINANCE 2019-17.**

1 WHEREAS, employers are encouraged to provide more generous paid time off policies if  
2 they choose, and should not be burdened by the provisions of this ordinance in doing so.

3  
4 WHEREAS, the County recognizes that mental wellness is as important as physical wellness  
5 in the maintenance of a healthy community and workforce.

6  
7 **Section 1. Title and Purpose**

8  
9 This Ordinance may be cited as the “Employee Wellness Act.” The Board of County  
10 Commissioners intends to add this new Article XIII to Chapter 14 to encourage the promotion of  
11 a healthy workforce in Bernalillo County.

12  
13 **Section 2. Definitions**

14  
15 As used in this article:

16 COUNTY. The County of Bernalillo.

17 EARNED PAID TIME OFF. Time that is compensated at the same hourly rate and with the  
18 same benefits, including health care benefits, as the employee normally earns during hours  
19 worked and is provided by an employer to an employee for the purposes described in this  
20 Ordinance.

21 EMPLOYEE. Any person an EMPLOYER, as defined in this Ordinance, suffers or permits  
22 to perform work for monetary compensation for at least 56 hours in a year within the  
23 unincorporated limits of the County. “EMPLOYEE” shall include persons who perform work for  
24 an employer on a full-time, part-time, seasonal, or temporary basis. Employee shall not include  
25 any person who is excluded from the definition of employee under NMSA 1978, §§ 50-4-  
26 21(C)(2)–(4), (6) of the New Mexico Minimum Wage Act, except that persons employed by the  
27 County of Bernalillo are employees.

28 “EMPLOYEE” shall not include interns working for an employer for academic credit in  
29 connection with a course of study at an accredited school, college or university or employees  
30 working for an accredited school, college or university pursuant to a work-study program while  
31 attending that school, college or university. “EMPLOYEE” shall not include any person who has  
32 received a certificate from the state labor commission pursuant to NMSA 1978, § 50-4-23 or §  
33 50-4-21(C)(11). “EMPLOYEE” shall not include independent contractors or per diem  
34 employees. “EMPLOYEE” shall not include any person employed by a parent, spouse, sibling,  
35 aunt, uncle, or cousin.

36 EMPLOYER. Any person, estate, business trust, association, receiver, cooperative  
37 association, club, corporation, non-profit corporation, company, firm, partnership, joint venture,  
38 syndicate, legal representative, or other entity or group of persons or entities that is required to  
39 apply for a business registration from the County, such entities’ corporate officers or executives,  
40 with a physical premises within the unincorporated limits of the County, which employs two or  
41 more employees within the unincorporated limits of the County. Employer shall include the  
42 County of Bernalillo.

43 NEW LOCAL BUSINESS. A business first incorporated within the State of New Mexico  
44 that maintains its principal office and place of business within the unincorporated limits of the  
45 County and that has not previously been issued a business registration from the County.

1 SEPARATION FROM EMPLOYMENT. The end of an employment relationship for any  
2 reason including termination, retirement, or resignation.

3 YEAR. A regular and consecutive 12-month period as determined by the EMPLOYER.  
4

5 **Section 3. Employer requirement to provide paid time off to employees. Use of paid time**  
6 **off. Employer compliance.**

7  
8 (A) Accrual of Paid Time Off

9 (1) Employees shall accrue a minimum of one (1) hour of earned paid time off for every  
10 32 hours worked, provided that employers may choose a higher accrual rate or to  
11 provide for accrual of all earned paid time off at the beginning of the year.

12 (2) The requirement to provide paid time off shall be enacted via three incremental  
13 increases of sixteen hours per year over three years.

14 (3) Effective July 1, 2020, employees shall not accrue more than 24 hours of earned paid  
15 time off in a year, unless the employer's policy provides for a higher limit on use or  
16 accrual.

17 (4) Effective July 1, 2021, employees shall not accrue more than 40 hours of earned paid  
18 time off in a year, unless the employer's policy provides for a higher limit on use or  
19 accrual.

20 (5) Effective July 1, 2022, employees shall not accrue more than 56 hours of earned paid  
21 time off in a year, unless the employer's policy provides for a higher limit on use or  
22 accrual.

23 (6) Earned paid time off shall begin to accrue on the employee's 90<sup>th</sup> day of employment,  
24 or on the effective date of this ordinance if an employee is already employed for at  
25 least 90 days on that date, or whichever is later.

26 (7) An employer may, but is not obligated to loan earned paid time off to an employee in  
27 advance of accrual or eligibility by such employee.

28 (8) Employees exempt from overtime requirements under federal and state law will be  
29 assumed to work no more than 40 hours in each work week for purposes of earned  
30 paid time off accrual, unless the employer selects a higher limit.

31 (9) Carry-over of earned paid time off. Unused accrued earned paid time off shall be  
32 carried over to the following year, but employees shall not carry over more than the  
33 total annual amount available to accrue, unless the employer's policy provides  
34 otherwise.

35 (10) If an employee is transferred but remains employed by the same employer, or if a  
36 successor employer replaces the original employer, or if an employee separates from  
37 employment but is rehired by the same employer within 12 months, the employer  
38 shall reinstate all previously accrued and unused earned paid time off to the  
39 employee, up to a maximum of 56 hours unless the employer chooses to provide  
40 more, or unless the employer previously chose to pay out the earned paid time off  
41 upon transfer or separation.

42 (11) The Board of County Commissioners will review a report of paid time off every year  
43 after the effective date of the ordinance in order to assess its adequacy.

44 (B) Permitted Uses and Procedures for Paid Time Off

45 (1) An employer shall permit an employee to use the earned paid time off accrued for any  
46 use.

**CONTINUATION PAGE 4, ORDINANCE 2019-17.**

- 1 (2) An employee shall not be entitled to use accrued earned paid time off until the  
2 employee has worked 56 hours in a year.
- 3 (3) Maximum 90-day delay in benefit.
- 4 (a) Employees shall be entitled to use accrued earned paid time off beginning on the  
5 90<sup>th</sup> calendar day following the date of employment, or the effective date of this  
6 law, whichever is later, unless the employer's policy provides that employees may  
7 use accrued time earlier.
- 8 (4) Request for earned paid time off.
- 9 (a) An employer shall provide earned paid time off upon the request of an employee  
10 or a family member, caretaker, or medical professional acting on the employee's  
11 behalf. At the time of employment, the employer shall instruct the employee on  
12 the manner in which such request shall be made, whether it may be made orally,  
13 in writing, by electronic means, or by any other means acceptable to the  
14 employer. When possible, the request shall include the expected duration of the  
15 absence.
- 16 (b) When the use of earned paid time off is foreseeable, such as a scheduled medical  
17 appointment or similar matters, the employee shall provide notice to the employer  
18 as soon as practicable and when possible, shall schedule the use of earned paid  
19 time off for these purposes in a manner that does not unduly disrupt the operations  
20 of the employer. At the time of employment, the employer shall instruct the  
21 employee on the manner in which such notice shall be given, whether it may be  
22 made orally, in writing, by electronic means, or by any other means acceptable to  
23 the employer. Advance notice cannot be required for paid leave taken under this  
24 ordinance due to an emergency or illness.
- 25 (5) An employer shall not require an employee to find a replacement worker as a  
26 condition of using earned paid time off nor count use of earned paid time off in a way  
27 that will lead to discipline, discharge, demotion, non-promotion, suspension or any  
28 other adverse action.
- 29 (6) An employer shall not take or threaten any adverse action whatsoever against an  
30 employee because the employee has exercised or attempted to exercise rights  
31 protected under this Ordinance or has in good faith alleged violations of this  
32 Ordinance.
- 33 (7) Confidentiality. All information an employer obtains related to the employee's  
34 reasons for taking earned paid time off shall be treated as confidential and not  
35 disclosed except with the permission of the employee or as necessary for the  
36 employer for validation purposes for insurance disability claims or accommodations  
37 consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

38 (C) Record Keeping

- 39 (1) Employers shall accurately track and record the amount of earned paid time off  
40 accrued or used by each employee for each pay period in any format the employer  
41 chooses, keep such records for the time period required for employment and payroll  
42 records set forth in 11.3.400.401(F) NMAC, and make such records available to the  
43 County upon request.
- 44 (2) Upon an employee's request, an employer shall inform an employee of the amount of  
45 earned paid time off accrued and used by the employee.

- 1 (3) An employer's failure to maintain records of the amount of earned paid time off  
2 accrued or used by each employee is a violation of this Ordinance.  
3 (4) In the absence of records, the fact finder may rely on accurate and contemporaneously  
4 maintained records of the employee's work time to determine the amount of paid time  
5 off accrued and used, or, if no accurate records are available, on the employee's  
6 reasonable estimates of hours worked.

7  
8 **Section 4. Enforcement of paid time off provisions.**  
9

10 (A) Administrative investigation and enforcement.

- 11 (1) Any covered employee or his or her representative may file an administrative  
12 complaint with the County charging that an employer has violated this Ordinance as  
13 to that employee.  
14 (2) When the County receives a complaint, the County shall notify the complainant's  
15 employer and shall provide information about the requirements of the process for  
16 investigating and adjudicating the complaint.  
17 (3) The County shall establish and maintain a timely process for investigating and  
18 adjudicating complaints that is fair to employees and employers. The County must  
19 publish information about the process on its website and resolve to educate employers  
20 and employees about the requirements of this Ordinance and the process for resolving  
21 complaints.  
22 (4) The County may review records regarding all employees at the employer's worksite  
23 in order to protect the identity of any employee identified in the complaint and to  
24 determine whether a pattern of violations has occurred.  
25 (5) The name of any employee identified in a complaint to the County shall be kept  
26 confidential as long as possible. Where the County determines that an employee's  
27 name must be disclosed in order to investigate a complaint further, it may do so only  
28 with the employee's consent.  
29 (6) When the County identifies a violation, it may attempt to reach an administrative  
30 resolution for payment of damages and penalties as set forth herein prior to bringing  
31 enforcement action in court.  
32 (7) Any guidelines or rules promulgated by the County shall have the force and effect of  
33 law and may be relied on by employers, employees and other parties to determine  
34 their rights and responsibilities under this Ordinance.  
35 (8) The County may suspend a business's County Business registration if the business  
36 fails to comply with a notice of inspection within forty-five (45) business days. The  
37 County shall reinstate the suspended license upon compliance with the notice of  
38 inspection.  
39 (9) When a complaint filed with the County is closed by the County, or when one  
40 hundred eighty (180) days have passed from the filing of such complaint and the  
41 County has not yet filed a civil action, whichever is earlier, the County shall so notify  
42 the complainant. The notification shall include authorization to the complainant to  
43 bring a civil action under Section 4(B).

44 (B) Civil Enforcement

- 45 (1) Upon exhaustion of the administrative process, or upon receipt of the authorization to  
46 bring a civil action, as outlined in Section 4(A) above, the County, or the covered

1 employee, or his or her representative, alleging a violation of this Ordinance, may  
2 bring a civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction against an employer.

3 Exhaustion of the administrative process or receipt of the authorization to bring a  
4 civil action by one member of class suing as a representative party satisfies this  
5 requirement for all class members.

6 (2) Upon prevailing, the employee shall recover all appropriate legal or equitable relief,  
7 the costs and expenses of suit, and reasonable attorney's fees; and, in the case of  
8 retaliation or adverse action, the plaintiff shall also recover actual damages, including  
9 but not limited to back pay, and shall have a right to reinstatement, rescission of  
10 discipline or other appropriate relief.

11 (3) In an action brought by the County, any damages recovered shall be payable to the  
12 individual employees who experienced the violation.

13 (C) Penalties.

14 (1) In addition to the civil remedies, any employer found to be in violation of this  
15 Ordinance shall also be liable for a civil penalty payable to the county of fifty dollars  
16 per week for each separate violation, not to exceed a maximum of \$500 for each  
17 offense.

18 (2) Each section of this Ordinance and employee for whom a violation is identified shall  
19 be counted separately for purposes of identifying a separate offense.

20  
21 **Section 5. Notice to employees of paid time off requirements. Regulations.**

22  
23 (A) Each employer subject to the provisions of Section 3 shall, at the time of ~~hiring~~  
24 employment, provide notice to each employee:

25 (1) of the entitlement to earned paid time off for employees, the amount of paid time off  
26 provided to employees and the terms under which earned paid time off may be used;

27 (2) ways in which an employee may submit a request for, or notify, an employer of the  
28 use of paid time off, whether orally, in writing or electronically, and to whom;

29 (3) that retaliation by the employer against the employee for requesting or using paid  
30 time off for which the employee is eligible is prohibited; and,

31 (4) that the employee has a right to file a complaint with the county for any violation of  
32 this Ordinance.

33 (B) Employers may comply with the provisions of this section by displaying a poster in a  
34 conspicuous place, accessible to employees, at the employer's place of business that  
35 contains the information required by this section in both English and Spanish.

36 (C) The County may adopt regulations to establish additional requirements concerning the  
37 means by which employers shall provide such notice.

38 (D) On or before the effective date of this Ordinance, the County shall make available on its  
39 website a summary notice to employees in English and Spanish of each provision of this  
40 Ordinance.

41  
42 **Section 6. Relationship to other requirements.**

43  
44 (A) This Ordinance shall not be construed as creating or imposing any requirement in conflict  
45 with, nor to preempt or otherwise limit or affect the applicability of any other law,  
46 collective bargaining agreement, regulation, requirement, or policy.

1 (B) This Ordinance shall not be construed to diminish or impair the rights or obligations of an  
2 employee or employer under any valid contract, collective bargaining agreement,  
3 employment benefit plan or other agreement providing more generous earned sick time or  
4 vacation time to an employee than required herein.  
5

6 **Section 7. No impact on more generous sick time, vacation time, or paid time off policies;  
7 no separate tracking; no additional paid time off required.**  
8

9 (A) Nothing in this Ordinance prohibits an employer from providing more generous policies  
10 than the minimum established under this Ordinance, and this Ordinance shall not be  
11 interpreted in a way that makes it in any way more difficult for employers to offer  
12 benefits that exceed the requirements of this Ordinance.

13 (B) Any employer with a paid time off policy that makes available an amount of paid time off  
14 sufficient to meet or exceed this Ordinance’s accrual and use requirements, is not  
15 required to provide additional or separate earned paid time off, nor to track paid time off  
16 separately, nor to in any way reduce the benefits provided to employees.

17 (C) Employers with probationary employment periods, as they relate to sick leave policies or  
18 vacation leave policies, so long as the policies are equivalent or greater in leave provided,  
19 may allow for greater delay in benefits than prescribed in Section 3(B)(3).  
20

21 **Section 8. Temporary exemption for new local business**  
22

23 (A) New local businesses shall be exempt from the requirements of this ordinance during the  
24 first twelve (12) months of operation as calculated from the date the new local business is  
25 issued its initial business registration permit with the County. Upon the expiration of 90  
26 days from the date of its business registration with the County, the County shall provide  
27 written notice to each new local business of the business’ obligation to comply with the  
28 requirements of this Ordinance after its first twelve (12) months of operation.  
29

30 **Section 9. Severability Clause**  
31

32 If any section, paragraph, sentence, clause, word or phrase of this Ordinance is for any reason  
33 held to be invalid or unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction, such decision shall  
34 not affect the validity of the remaining provisions of this Ordinance. The Commission hereby  
35 declares that it would have passed this Ordinance and each section, paragraph, sentence, clause,  
36 word or phrase thereof irrespective of any provisions being declared unconstitutional or  
37 otherwise invalid.  
38

39 **Section 10. Compilation**  
40

41 The Ordinance amendment prescribed by Sections 1 through 8 shall amend, be incorporated in,  
42 and made part of the Bernalillo County Code.  
43  
44  
45  
46

1 **Section 11. Effective Date.**

2 This Ordinance shall take effect July 1, 2020 or on the date of termination of any collective  
3 bargaining agreement.

4  
5 **BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF**  
6 **BERNALILLO COUNTY, NEW MEXICO** this 20<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2019.

7  
8 **APPROVED AS TO FORM**

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

9 \_\_\_\_\_  
10 W. Ken Martinez, County Attorney

\_\_\_\_\_   
Maggie Hart Stebbins, Chair

11  
12  
13 \_\_\_\_\_

Debbie O'Malley, Vice Chair

14  
15 \_\_\_\_\_

Steven Michael Quezada, Member

16 **ATTEST:**

17  
18 \_\_\_\_\_  
19 Linda Stover, County Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_   
Lonnie C. Talbert, Member  
\_\_\_\_\_   
Charlene E. Pyskoty, Member

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21  
22  
23  
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