

THE FORCE

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN AVOIDED

Funding for the government was set to expire on September 30. With only hours to spare, congress was able to pass legislation that would fund the government through December 3. The continuing resolution passed with bipartisan support. President Biden signed the bill before midnight so you will not see any interruptions to your pay.



While we are pleased that some sort of funding legislation was passed, we could be back in this situation in a mere nine weeks. As many of you remember the last government shutdown in 2018 was the longest shutdown in US history. The shutdown of 2018 lasted from December 22, 2018 through January 25, 2019 (35 days). During this shutdown federal employees missed multiple paychecks.

There have been several legislative changes since the last shutdown. Perhaps most importantly is the Government Employee Fair Treatment Act, which was signed into law by then President Trump on Jan 16, 2019. Previously there was no guarantee that employees would receive retroactive pay once a shutdown ended, this law alleviated that uncertainty. If or when we experience the next government shutdown, employees are guaranteed to receive their retroactive pay.

NTEU will continue to urge lawmakers to be productive during these next nine weeks. We do not want to have experience another December government shutdown. The goal of NTEU is for lawmakers to agree upon a year long appropriation bill that increases funding for government agencies, including the IRS.

Alex Walker

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New Childcare Benefit

With the new fiscal year comes new changes to the National Agreement 2022. Among some of those changes include Article 56 being added. Article 56 talks about the new childcare benefit that went into effect October 1, 2021.

NTEU proposed and Won an important new right for employees dealing with childcare. On or about November 14th, the IRS will begin the open enrollment. The IRS anticipates the enrollment period to last for 90 days.

The new childcare subsidy program will benefit employees with a total family income (TFI) limit of 90,000.00 or less. Eligible employees whose TFI is 70,000.00 or less, will be entitled to the maximum of 5,000 per year, which is the highest amount an employee can receive without incurring tax obligations.

The IRS plans to utilize a vendor to administer the program. The vendor will not be able to make childcare payments until January 2022, but the payments could be retroactive to October 2021.

Make sure to keep an eye out for the open enrollment period and take advantage of this program!

Loretha Hudson



The Chapter is looking for NTEU members interested in serving as Union Stewards beginning October 1, 2021! Appointed stewards will serve as advocates on behalf of NTEU members in management-employee disputes, write newsletter articles regarding workplace issues, and attend NTEU events and trainings on labor law and various workplace issues and policies.

If interested, please send Chapter President, Debbie Mullikin and Chief Steward, Shannon Lovins a short statement of interest (5-8 sentences) at Debora.j.Mullikin@irs.gov and Shannon.K.Lovins@irs.gov expressing why you would like to be a Union Steward, how long you've been working for the IRS, and what building you are working in. Prior experience is not required. Stewards will be trained by the Chapter President, Chief Steward, and NTEU attorney prior to handling any cases.

Article 50 – Changes to Telework

Covid 19 has wreaked havoc on our daily lives and brought with it a laundry list of limitations on almost all federal employees. However, one amazing thing it has done is open the gateway to frequent telework for many positions.



NTEU took advantage of the pandemic evacuation and used it as a platform to show the IRS that employees can physically do their job duties from home, and successfully perform the job duties and requirements. NTEU used our telework success to help support positions such as CSRs in AM, CRs in ACS, Case Advocates in TAS, CER reviewers in AM, and many other positions eligible for telework (for a full list of telework-eligible positions see Exhibit 50-2 of the IRS-NTEU contract). Don't panic if your position is not listed because you may still be eligible if it meets the criteria for frequent telework under Article 50 of the contract.

NTEU also successfully negotiated the mileage restriction for teleworkers to be extended from 150-200 miles. Employees with special circumstances may also request a waiver of the mileage restriction for up to 2 pay periods per year. This would allow the employee to work outside of the 200 miles restriction for a short period of time. So, if you needed to care of a loved one after a surgery or would like to go to the beach with your family and telework from there you can now do that under the new union contract.

Lastly, if your position is eligible for frequent telework, be sure to keep in mind that the days in which you are allowed to telework may be limited to three days, instead of four, depending on the nature of your work. It is also important to note that management may direct employees to report to the worksite due to special circumstances on their scheduled telework day. These new telework benefits under the new contract is a huge win for NTEU and we hope that you take advantage of them!

Rachel Lovins

STEWARDS' CORNER

Your NTEU Stewards are here to fight for you! We are available in person, by phone, email, or skype!

GATEWAY STEWARDS

President: Debbie Mullikin

Vice President: Chris Pierce

Secretary/Chief Steward:

Shannon Lovins

Day Shift Full Time Stewards:

Loretha Hudson, Rachel Lovins,
Angela Moore

Day Shift Part Time Stewards:

Tonya Morris, Nicole Guethlein, Jennifer
Smith, Hope Osborne

Swing Shift Chief Steward:

Alex Walker

Swing Shift Part Time Stewards:

Brandy Belew

ISO BUILDING

Treasurer/Full Time Steward:

Janet Colwell

NTEU EMAIL

ctr.cov.cirsc.nteu.73.covington@irs.gov

Caregiver Leave Extended Due to Covid-19

The IRS has extended the time frame for granting a limited amount of excused absence to evacuated, telework employees who have caregiving responsibilities that prevent them from doing their work due to COVID-19.

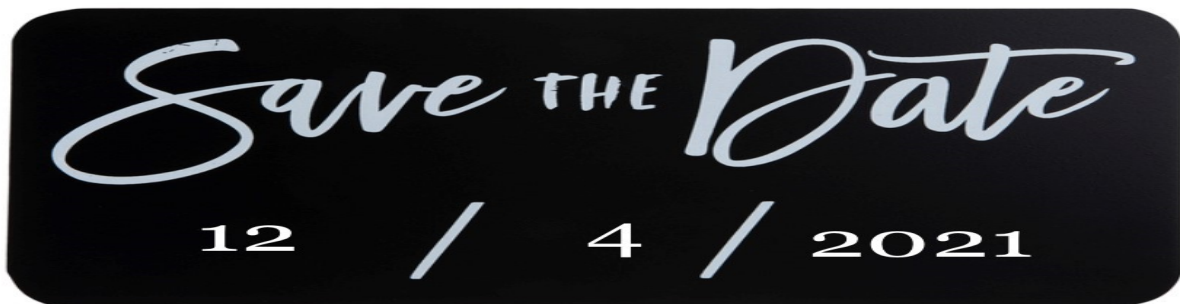
You can now use this type of excused absence until December 31, 2021, or when the individual's evacuation order is lifted, whichever occurs first. However, beginning October 10, 2021 the amount of leave to be granted has been reduced from 20 hours to no more than 16 hours per pay period.

You must get approval from management for this leave and when it is approved you would report that time under time code 990-85580. If you are denied using the excused absence leave,

please contact NTEU immediately to discuss your situation and to see what options you do have. NTEU can be contacted by emailing us at ctr.cov.cirsc.nteu.73.covington@irs.gov.

These are trying times for all of us, and COVID-19 has caused a lot of stress at home and at work. Please reach out to EAP (employee assistance program) if you need someone to talk to. EAP provides Free counseling to employees and their family members and can be contacted by calling 1-800-977-7631 (TDD: 800-697-0353). Someone is available to answer your call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days per year. Mental health is just as important as physical health.

Hope Osborne Towe



It's Holiday Party time again

The NTEU73 Holiday Party is Going to be held on December 4th, 2021 from 7-11pm.

We will have more details to come soon!

In the meantime, PLEASE update your address!

You can do this by going to www.NTEU.org, or just email your updated information to any steward. Invitations will be going out this month. RSVP's will be due back by November 15th. Please include a \$5 non refundable deposit. Each member is invited to bring a plus one.

All RSVP's need to be mailed back to NTEU Chapter 73, PO Box 12389, Covington, Ky. 41012 or dropped off to your local NTEU73 office you have any questions, please contact the Nteu73 office at 859-320-3848.

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We hope to see you there!

Chapter 73 Facebook



With everything happening so fast with vaccination mandates and other issues, NTEU Chapter 73's Facebook page is the place to go.

There are dozens of new posts regarding everything from FAQs, Q&A, and Event details. If you do not like being inundated with flyers, Facebook has almost all of them posted with the information coming straight to your phone or device!

The Force is put on Facebook each month, even before the hard copies are back from the printer. Facebook users get access to it before anyone else. There are even occasional bonus articles on the page to keep employees updated. In addition, links are often posted to federal employee infor-

mation sites so that employees can keep updated information on the dastardly deeds of Congress.

Our Facebook page is a go-to page for members to stay up-to-date with everything happening in the chapter.

With the upswing of social media over the past few years, more and more people use it for daily news. Rest assured, on the NTEU73 page there will be no fake news.

The website, nteu73.org, is also a great source, but Facebook is so convenient. If you like and follow us, you should be as up-to-date as anyone in the IRS.

The Facebook page is "Official NTEU Chapter 73." The page that says NTEU Chapter 73 is not our official page. The union only vouches for information on the Official NTEU Chapter 73 Facebook page. This information was shared with many members on the CIRSC Facebook page a few weeks ago.

Shannon Lovins



Address Change?

If you have recently changed your address, please let the union know so you can continue to get information from NTEU. IRS does not share changes you made with them, so you must also tell us! You can stay on top of the NTEU news by also giving us a home email address. Please send any address/email changes to Shannon Lovins / NTEU73 Membership:

Shannon.k.lovins@irs.gov

You can also change this information yourself on www.NTEU.org

Outside Employment

There have been times when the money I earned at the IRS was not enough to support my daughters, so I did what I needed to do as a responsible parent. I decided to get a part time job to supplement my income. My goal was to work part time for about 8 months, just enough to save a little so I could meet my bills each month. When I left my previous job, I was earning more money, however, better health insurance and having a thrift saving plan was nice.



The first person I reached out to was my manager. I knew that I needed to have a job approved before I could accept one. So my questions were geared to which kind of jobs were acceptable. At the time, I was told that any job with gambling or alcohol were not acceptable for a federal employee. I know that that is not the same today. I also needed to know what form to fill out. I remember it was just a paper form that I filled out to give back to my manager. I got a part time job that was 3 nights a week at an ice cream store. I don't remember how much it paid, but the pay was every week. Since our pay days are biweekly, that was a benefit.

The next time I requested a second job was in 2002 when my girls were off to college. Being an empty nester, it was just something to occupy my time. I started working at Walmart. I still filled out a paper form and my job was approved quickly.

In 2018, we were shut down in December because the budget was not signed. I got a job at a security company instead of getting unemployment that I would need to pay back. I knew a security job at the airport would be approved. I submitted my paperwork through SETR when I returned to the IRS after the shutdown.

I will share the newest procedures in play. There are still jobs that you may not be able to apply for, such as jobs that are considered self-employment, like being an Uber driver. So, before getting outside employment to supplement your income, it is best to ask your manager what type of jobs you can apply for. Instead of going through SETR, you can go through HRConnect. It is easy to find it on the home page. On top of the homepage are 5 large boxes labeled, "Announcements," "My Information," and "My Outside Employment." The next line is "Reports and Security Information." When opening the "My Outside Employment" tab, there are a series of questions to answer. Fill them out and hit submit. The procedure to apply is easy, efficient, and streamlined.

With EPL no longer available and caregiver leave ending at the end of December, I am sure that a lot of us can use additional income to support our families. I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities out there. Just be sure to ask your manager first about the types of employment opportunities outside of IRS you are allowed to apply for. Remember, unapproved outside employment may trigger discipline, so it is very important that you talk to your managers first and have their approval in writing.

Good luck!

Janet Colwell

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Last months Crossword Answers

Down: Union Steward, One, Breaks

Across: Labor Recognition, Overtime, Credit

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In addition, take advantage of 0% financing for 18 months. Go to Becker.com/NTEU.

The first 30 NTEU members to register for Becker's CPA Exam Review each year (beginning each October) will also receive Becker Flashcards at no additional cost.



jiffylube

NTEU members receive a 15 percent discount for all services at any participating Jiffy Lube® location, including a Jiffy Lube Signature Service® oil change or other preventive maintenance services. Just present your valid NTEU membership card and NTEU's fleet account number to receive the discount.

ACAMS The Association of Certified Anti-Money Laundering Specialists

The CAMS Certification is considered to be the gold standard certification in anti-money laundering and financial crime. CAMS is an excellent way to demonstrate your expertise in the field, and employers are seeking out people who are CAMS Certified. NTEU members that sign up for the CAMS Certification package can receive the hard copy textbook for CAMS preparation for free (\$99 value).

In addition: If you would like to take advantage of the CAMS preparation virtual classroom, NTEU members will receive a \$100 discount on top of the standard government discount (Retail price \$495, NTEU price \$295)



FREE SERVICES

Retirement questions and Estimate—Retirement Paperwork (GRB) - Set up Social Security Account—Thrift Savings Plans questions (interfund transfers—lifetime income—Taxes-withdrawals) - Medicare questions (Part A, B, C & D) along with FEHB (Federal Employee Health benefits), FEGLI (Federal Employee Group Life Insurance) questions, changes,.

VOLUNTARY BENEFITS OFFERED (Prices upon request)



Short Term Disability Plans —Critical Illness Plans —Accidents Plans—Hospital Plans



Cancer Insurance Plans



Whole (Permanent) Life Insurance Policies (Cash Value + Paid Dividends)

Other Benefits available Dental, Vision and Legal Shield



Paul and Roxie Thornton

Phone: 423 309 2758 or 423 309 2768

FAX: 423 370 1296

Email : paul@unitedbenefits.com

United Benefits Office—Claims

Phone 866 558 2121