

# RAMADAN ACCOMMODATIONS AT WORK AND SCHOOL

As'Salamu'alaikum community members,

Ramadan is upon us, which means that as part of your usual pre-Ramadan preparations, now is also a good time to have a conversation with your employers or school administration about requesting reasonable accommodations for your Ramadan activities such as evening activities at the masjid. While it might seem intimidating to request an accommodation at work or at school, remember that you have a right to practice your religion and there are laws that ensure you can exercise this right.

## IN THE WORK PLACE

Washington law requires that an employer reasonably accommodate an employee's religious beliefs or practices unless doing so would create an undue burden in conducting business.

### WHAT IS A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION?

One that eliminates the employee's conflict between his or her religious practices and work requirements, and that does not cause an undue hardship for the employer. This means that the employer cannot unequivocally refuse to make a religious accommodation, but rather the employer must engage in a good faith interactive process to resolve the conflict between your religious needs and the job's requirements.

### WHAT IS AN UNDUE HARDSHIP?

An undue hardship occurs when the following occur:

- The employer would suffer costs more than the administrative costs; or
- The accommodation diminishes efficiency in other jobs; or
- The accommodation infringes on other employees' job rights or benefits; or
- The accommodation impairs workplace safety; or
- The accommodation conflicts with another law or regulation

### WHAT ARE COMMON ACCOMMODATIONS DURING RAMADAN?

- Flexible scheduling to allow for Iftar and Tarawih
- Shift substitutions or swaps
- Job reassignments
- Modification to workplace policies (schedule, etc.)

## THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN ASKING FOR RAMADAN ACCOMMODATION:

- Familiarize yourself with your employer's procedures for requesting religious accommodations;
- Make it clear that you are requesting the accommodation because of your sincerely-held religious belief or practice (employers may not determine whether a religious belief or practice is required or conforms with a particular religion);
- Make the formal request to your direct supervisor or to the person designated by company policy, as early as you can;
- Follow up on your formal request in writing; and
- Your employer is not required to provide the specific or preferred accommodation you're requesting. If your employer has given you a reasonable accommodation, they will have met their legal obligations.

## AT SCHOOL

Parents are encouraged to contact their children's schools and teachers in advance and in writing to request religious accommodations for their children during Ramadan and Eid. Schools cannot penalize students for missing a day for religious holidays.

### WHAT ARE COMMON ACCOMMODATIONS DURING RAMADAN?

- Being excused from strenuous physical activity
- Being excused from class for an upcoming Eid religious holiday
- Breaks for prayer throughout the day\*
- Student-led prayers\*
- Asking to be excused from lunch to go to the library or take a nap during the lunch break

*\* These accommodations are available to students all year long, not just during Ramadan.*



For assistance with or questions about requesting a religious accommodation, contact CAIR-WA at [info@cairwa.org](mailto:info@cairwa.org) or 206-367-4081.