

**BERNALILLO COUNTY**

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

**ORDINANCE NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

1 MANDATING EMPLOYER PAID TIME OFF TO EMPLOYEES WITHIN BERNALILLO  
2 COUNTY; PRESCRIBING RULES AND PENALTIES; SETTING AN EFFECTIVE DATE  
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4 WHEREAS, all workers at some time during each year need limited time off from work to  
5 take care of their own health needs or those of family members; and  
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7 WHEREAS, according to analysis of paid sick leave in Albuquerque by the University of  
8 New Mexico’s Bureau of Business and Economic Research:

- 9 • Employees least likely to have the right to earn sick time are part-time workers, those  
10 earning less than \$15,000/year and those employed in leisure, hospitality and retail  
11 sectors;
- 12 • Bernalillo County lags behind the rest of the country in rates of access to paid sick leave;
- 13 • Employees without paid leave go to work sick approximately 3.5 times a year; 1.8 times  
14 with risk of spreading the illness;
- 15 • Businesses that do have paid leave experience lower turnover; and  
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17 WHEREAS, workers in jobs with high public contact, such as health care, services,  
18 restaurant and retail employees, are unlikely to have the right to earn sick time, thereby  
19 increasing their risk of passing illnesses to co-workers and customers; and  
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21 WHEREAS, the right to earn paid time off, as provided herein, will reduce recovery time  
22 from illnesses, enable people to obtain preventive medical care and prenatal care, promote the  
23 use of regular medical providers rather than emergency care, enable parents to care for sick  
24 children instead of sending them to school, prevent people from spreading illness to the public  
25 and enable victims of domestic abuse, sexual assault and stalking to get away from their abusers,  
26 thereby protecting the health, safety and general welfare of people in Bernalillo County; and  
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28 WHEREAS, victims of domestic abuse, stalking and sexual assault often lose days of paid  
29 employment or lose their jobs because they need time off to escape and recover from such  
30 situations, and that lost income is particularly devastating for such victims, who need economic  
31 security to ensure safety; and  
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33 WHEREAS, the right to use earned sick time to care for a family member must reflect the  
34 diversity of family caregiving relationships today; and  
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36 WHEREAS, one in six employees in the U.S. report that they or a family member has been  
37 fired, suspended, punished or threatened by an employer because they needed to take sick time to  
38 care for themselves or a family member; and  
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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.

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

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7 **Section 1. Title and Purpose**

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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.

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13 **Section 2. Definitions**

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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)(12). “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 off.**  
6 **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. Employers may choose a higher accrual rate or may choose to  
11 provide for accrual of all earned paid time off at the beginning of the year.

12 (2) Employees shall not accrue or use more than 56 hours of earned paid time off in a  
13 year, unless the employer's policy provides for a higher limit on use or accrual.

14 (3) Earned paid time off shall begin to accrue on the employee's date of employment or  
15 on the effective date of this Ordinance if an employee is already employed on that  
16 date.

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

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

22 (6) Carry-over of earned paid time off. Unused accrued earned paid time off shall be  
23 carried over to the following year, but employees cannot carry over more than 56  
24 hours of earned sick time, unless the employer's policy provides otherwise. An  
25 employee may only have a maximum of 56 hours of earned paid time off at any given  
26 time.

27 (7) If an employee is transferred but remains employed by the same employer, or if a  
28 successor employer replaces the original employer, or if an employee separates from  
29 employment but is rehired by the same employer within 12 months, the employer  
30 shall reinstate all previously accrued and unused earned paid time off to the  
31 employee, up to a maximum of 56 hours unless the employer chooses to provide  
32 more, or unless the employer previously chose to pay out the earned paid time off  
33 upon transfer or separation.

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

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

37 (2) An employee shall not be entitled to use accrued earned paid time off until the  
38 employee has worked 56 hours in a year.

39 (3) Maximum 90-day delay in benefit.

40 (a) Employees shall be entitled to use accrued earned paid time off beginning on the  
41 90<sup>th</sup> calendar day following the date of employment, or the effective date of this  
42 law, whichever is later, unless the employer's policy provides that employees may  
43 use accrued time earlier.

44 (4) Request for earned paid time off.

45 (a) An employer shall provide earned paid time off upon the request of an employee  
46 or a family member, caretaker, or medical professional acting on the employee's

1           behalf. At the time of employment, the employer shall instruct the employee on  
2           the manner in which such request shall be made, whether it may be made orally,  
3           in writing, by electronic means, or by any other means acceptable to the  
4           employer. When possible, the request shall include the expected duration of the  
5           absence.

6           (b) When the use of earned paid time off is foreseeable, such as a scheduled medical  
7           appointment or similar matters, the employee shall provide notice to the employer  
8           as soon as practicable and when possible, shall schedule the use of earned paid  
9           time off for these purposes in a manner that does not unduly disrupt the operations  
10          of the employer. At the time of employment, the employer shall instruct the  
11          employee on the manner in which such notice shall be given, whether it may be  
12          made orally, in writing, by electronic means, or by any other means acceptable to  
13          the employer. Advance notice cannot be required for paid leave taken under this  
14          ordinance due to an emergency or illness.

15          (5) An employer shall not require an employee to find a replacement worker as a  
16          condition of using earned paid time off nor count use of earned paid time off in a way  
17          that will lead to discipline, discharge, demotion, non-promotion, suspension or any  
18          other adverse action.

19          (6) An employer shall not take or threaten any adverse action whatsoever against an  
20          employee because the employee has exercised or attempted to exercise rights  
21          protected under this Ordinance or has in good faith alleged violations of this  
22          Ordinance.

23          (7) Confidentiality. All information an employer obtains related to the employee's  
24          reasons for taking earned paid time off shall be treated as confidential and not  
25          disclosed except with the permission of the employee.

26          (C) Record Keeping

27          (1) Employers shall accurately track and record the amount of earned paid time off  
28          accrued or used by each employee for each pay period in any format the employer  
29          chooses, keep such records for the time period required for employment and payroll  
30          records set forth in 11.3.400.401(F) NMAC, and make such records available to the  
31          County upon request.

32          (2) Upon an employee's request, an employer shall inform an employee of the amount of  
33          earned paid time off accrued and used by the employee.

34          (3) An employer's failure to maintain records of the amount of earned paid time off  
35          accrued or used by each employee is a violation of this Ordinance.

36          (4) In the absence of records, the fact finder may rely on accurate and contemporaneously  
37          maintained records of the employee's work time to determine the amount of paid time  
38          off accrued and used, or, if no accurate records are available, on the employee's  
39          reasonable estimates of hours worked.

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41          **Section 4. Enforcement of paid time off provisions.**

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43          (A) Administrative investigation and enforcement.

44          (1) Any covered employee or his or her representative may file an administrative  
45          complaint with the County charging that an employer has violated this Ordinance as  
46          to that employee.

- 1 (2) When the County receives a complaint, the County may review records regarding all  
2 employees at the employer's worksite in order to protect the identity of any employee  
3 identified in the complaint and to determine whether a pattern of violations has  
4 occurred.
- 5 (3) The name of any employee identified in a complaint to the County shall be kept  
6 confidential as long as possible. Where the County determines that an employee's  
7 name must be disclosed in order to investigate a complaint further, it may do so only  
8 with the employee's consent.
- 9 (4) When the County identifies a violation, it may attempt to reach an administrative  
10 resolution for payment of damages and penalties as set forth herein prior to bringing  
11 enforcement action in court.
- 12 (5) Any guidelines or rules promulgated by the County shall have the force and effect of  
13 law and may be relied on by employers, employees and other parties to determine  
14 their rights and responsibilities under this Ordinance.
- 15 (6) The County may suspend a business's County Business registration if the business  
16 fails to comply with a notice of inspection within thirty (30) business days. The  
17 County shall reinstate the suspended license upon compliance with the notice of  
18 inspection.

19 (B) Civil Enforcement

- 20 (1) The County, or the covered employee, or his or her representative, alleging a  
21 violation of this Ordinance, may bring a civil action in a court of competent  
22 jurisdiction against an employer.
- 23 (2) Upon prevailing, the employee shall recover all appropriate legal or equitable relief,  
24 liquidated damages calculated at two times the value of the earned paid time off  
25 accrued, the costs and expenses of suit, and reasonable attorney's fees; and, in the  
26 case of retaliation or adverse action, the plaintiff shall also recover actual damages,  
27 including but not limited to back pay, and shall have a right to reinstatement,  
28 rescission of discipline or other appropriate relief.
- 29 (3) In an action brought by the County, any damages recovered shall be payable to the  
30 individual employees who experienced the violation.

31 (C) Penalties.

- 32 (1) In addition to the civil remedies, any employer found to be in violation of this  
33 Ordinance shall also be liable for a civil penalty payable to the county of fifty dollars  
34 per week for each separate violation, not to exceed a maximum of \$500 for each  
35 offense.
- 36 (2) Each section of this Ordinance and employee for whom a violation is identified shall  
37 be counted separately for purposes of identifying a separate offense.

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

- 40  
41 (A) Each employer subject to the provisions of Section 3 shall, at the time of ~~hiring~~  
42 employment, provide notice to each employee:
  - 43 (1) of the entitlement to earned paid time off for employees, the amount of paid time off  
44 provided to employees and the terms under which earned paid time off may be used;
  - 45 (2) ways in which an employee may submit a request for, or notify, an employer of the  
46 use of paid time off, whether orally, in writing or electronically, and to whom;

- 1 (3) that retaliation by the employer against the employee for requesting or using paid
- 2 time off for which the employee is eligible is prohibited; and,
- 3 (4) that the employee has a right to file a complaint with the county for any violation of
- 4 this Ordinance.

5 (B) Employers may comply with the provisions of this section by displaying a poster in a

6 conspicuous place, accessible to employees, at the employer’s place of business that

7 contains the information required by this section in both English and Spanish.

8 (C) The County may adopt regulations to establish additional requirements concerning the

9 means by which employers shall provide such notice.

10 (D) On or before the effective date of this Ordinance, the County shall make available on its

11 website a summary notice to employees in English and Spanish of each provision of this

12 Ordinance.

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14 **Section 6. Relationship to other requirements.**

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16 (A) This Ordinance provides for minimum standards for earned paid time off and shall not be

17 construed as creating or imposing any requirement in conflict with, nor to preempt or

18 otherwise limit or affect the applicability of, any other law, contract, regulation,

19 requirement, policy or standard that provides for more generous compensation, rights,

20 benefits or protections.

21 (B) This Ordinance shall not be construed to diminish or impair the rights or obligations of an

22 employee or employer under any valid contract, collective bargaining agreement,

23 employment benefit plan or other agreement providing more generous earned sick time or

24 vacation time to an employee than required herein.

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26 **Section 7. No impact on more generous sick time, vacation time, or paid time off policies;**

27 **no separate tracking; no additional paid time off required.**

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29 (A) Nothing in this Ordinance prohibits an employer from providing more generous policies

30 than the minimum established under this Ordinance, and this Ordinance shall not be

31 interpreted in a way that makes it in any way more difficult for employers to offer

32 benefits that exceed the requirements of this Ordinance.

33 (B) Any employer with a paid time off policy that makes available an amount of paid time off

34 sufficient to meet or exceed this Ordinance’s accrual and use requirements, is not

35 required to provide additional or separate earned paid time off, nor to track paid time off

36 separately, nor to in any way reduce the benefits provided to employees.

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38 **Section 8. Temporary exemption for new local business**

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40 (A) New local businesses shall be exempt from the requirements of this ordinance during the

41 first twelve (12) months of operation as calculated from the date the new local business is

42 issued its initial business registration permit with the County. Upon the expiration of 90

43 days from the date of its business registration with the County, the County shall provide

44 written notice to each new local business of the business’ obligation to comply with the

45 requirements of this Ordinance after its first twelve (12) months of operation.

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**Section 9. Severability Clause**

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

**Section 10. Compilation**

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

**Section 11. Effective Date.**

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

**BE IT ORDAINED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF BERNALILLO COUNTY, NEW MEXICO** this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.

**APPROVED AS TO FORM**

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Debbie O'Malley, Vice Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Steven Michael Quezada, Member

**ATTEST:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Lonnie C. Talbert, Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Linda Stover, County Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Charlene E. Pyskoty, Member