



Labor & Employment Issues Client Alert

Pitta LLP
For Clients
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NYS COVID-19 UPDATE: ABSENTEE VOTING, ADDITIONAL \$600 IN UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS AND OTHER INITIATIVES

Yesterday, New York State Governor Andrew Cuomo announced a series of policy initiatives to help New Yorkers cope with the COVID-19 pandemic

Governor Cuomo stated that unemployed New Yorkers will receive \$600 in additional weekly unemployment benefits. The period for unemployment is also being extended for another 13 weeks, for a total of 39 weeks. The State expects to be reimbursed by the Federal government under the recently enacted Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (“CARES”) Act.

In an effort to ensure the safety of New Yorkers seeking to vote, Governor Cuomo will issue an executive order permitting all New Yorkers to vote by absentee ballot in the June 23rd primary elections.

The Governor also announced the following:

- Flags on all state government buildings have been directed to be flown at half-staff in honor of those that the state have lost to COVID-19 and will remain lowered while New York is on PAUSE.
- New York State is increasing the maximum fine for violations of the State’s social distancing protocol from \$500 to \$1000 to help address the lack of adherence to social distancing.
- SUNY-Albany President Havidan Rodriguez is working with State Department of Health and Northwell Health to conduct more COVID-19 data research and increase testing in communities of color.
- New Yorkers without health insurance are able to apply through New York State of Health through May 15, 2020; they must apply within 60 days of losing coverage.
- The Department of Health has developed a test to detect antibodies to the COVID-19 infection in an individual’s blood.
- New York State is investing in private companies to bring rapid testing to scale; interested businesses should contact the Empire State Development Corporation at 212-803-3100 or COVID-19Supplies@esd.ny.gov

CUNY TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO STUDENTS IMPACTED BY COVID-19

The City University of New York (“CUNY”) launched the Chancellor’s Emergency Relief Fund to help students facing financial hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Fund will provide \$500 grants to thousands of CUNY students.

The students will begin to receive the grants the week of April 20, recipients will be chosen by a lottery from a group of roughly 14,000 students who meet the financial need and academic criteria.

CUNY stated that once it receives more funding, it will provide grants to more students in and is actively looking more donors. CUNY is seeking to raise \$10 million for the Fund.

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