

VESSA

Effective: August 25, 2003

The Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act (known as "VESSA") provides an employee who is a victim of domestic violence, or who has a family or household member who is a victim of domestic violence, with up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave per any twelve (12) month period to address issues arising from domestic or sexual violence.

An employee may take VESSA leave to:

1. Seek **medical attention** for, or recovery from, physical or psychological injuries caused by domestic or sexual violence to the employee or employee's family or household member;
 2. Obtain **victim services** for the employee or employee's family or household member;
 3. Obtain psychological or other **counseling** for the employee or the employee's family or household member;
 4. Participate in **safety planning**, including temporary or permanent relocation or other actions to increase the safety of the victim from future domestic or sexual violence; or
 5. Seek **legal assistance** to ensure the health and safety of the victim, including participating in court proceedings related to the violence.
- VESSA leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced work schedule.

Notice and Certification Requirements

The employee shall provide the employer with at least 48 hours' advance notice of the employee's intention to take leave, except in such cases where it is not practicable to provide such notice.

Employers may require certification that VESSA leave is to be taken for one of the purposes listed and that the employee or employee's family or household member is a victim of domestic or sexual violence. An employee may satisfy such a certification requirement by providing a sworn statement of the employee and:

- Documentation from a victim services organization, attorney, member of the clergy, or medical or other professional from whom the employee or the employee's family or household member has sought assistance;
- A police or court record; or
- Other corroborating evidence.

Employers must maintain the confidentiality of all information pertaining to the use of VESSA leave, notice of an employee's intention to take VESSA leave, and certification provided by the employee.

Penalties

If an employer is found to have violated the Act, the Department may require the employer to:

- Pay damages equal to the amount of wages, salary, employment benefits, public assistance, or other compensation denied or lost with interest;
- Provide equitable relief, including but not limited to, reinstatement, promotion and reasonable accommodations; and
- Pay reasonable attorney's fees, expert witness fees, and other costs of the action.

Enforcement

The Illinois Department of Labor administers and enforces the provisions of this Act.

For more information, contact:

Illinois Department of Labor
160 North LaSalle Street, Suite C-1300
Chicago, Illinois 60601
(312) 793-6797

<http://www.state.il.us/agency/idol>



**ILLINOIS
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN
SERVICES (DHS)
BUREAU OF DOMESTIC AND
SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

The Illinois Department of Human Services (DHS) Bureau of Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention supports comprehensive community-based services that meet the immediate and long-term needs of domestic and sexual assault victims and their families; outreach; prevention; training; and services for male perpetrators of domestic violence.

For more information about DHS programs and services call the DHS Help Line:

1-800-843-6154
1-800-447-6404 (TTY)

There is no charge for domestic or sexual violence services.

To locate a domestic violence service agency call:

National Domestic Violence Hotline
1-800-799-SAFE (7233)
1-800-787-3224 (TTY)

To locate a sexual abuse crisis center call:

National Sexual Assault Hotline
1-800-656-HOPE (4613)



ILLINOIS

Criminal Justice Information Authority

120 S. Riverside Plaza, Suite 1016
Chicago, Illinois 60606
312-793-8550, TDD: 312-793-4170, Fax: 312-793-8422
www.icija.state.il.us



VESSA:

**Victims' Economic
Security and Safety Act**

(820 ILCS 180/1 et seq.)

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

VESSA provides an employee who is a victim of domestic or sexual violence, or who has a family or household member who is a victim of domestic or sexual violence, with up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave from work during any 12-month period to address the domestic or sexual violence.

Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor

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