

# **Interview Protocol for MA Business Interviews on Earned Paid Sick Time**

April 9, 2013

## ABOUT THIS SURVEY

Surveys of employers about their sick days' practices and about their views regarding a new law can be helpful in a city or state campaign. We were asked by Massachusetts' advocates to come up with a survey tool, which is below. We hope advocates will adapt this tool to suit their particular needs. We'd welcome your ideas on how to improve this survey and also would enjoy talking through any questions.

Jodie Levin Epstein, Deputy Director, CLASP

Dr. Eileen Appelbaum, Senior Economist, Center for Economic and Policy Research.

## POINTS FOR THE CALLER THAT SCHEDULES INTERVIEW

Recommend an initial call to schedule a 10-minute interview with the owner or with the HR manager (or whoever takes care of HR). The purpose of the interview is to learn how your company handles situations in which an employee needs to miss work for a day or two - for example, because they have a bad cold or stomach virus. We are also interested in learning your company's view of letting employees earn paid sick time.

## INTRODUCTION

1. Hi, I am XXX and I work with State Legislator, XXXX. We are interviewing about a dozen businesses in Massachusetts to learn more about what happens when an employee has to stay home for a day or two because they are sick.
2. State legislator XXX has been active in an effort to secure a program of earned sick time in Massachusetts and we want to learn more from companies like yours.
3. Your responses will be kept confidential and neither you or your company will be identified unless your company says otherwise
4. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed. This should take about 10 minutes.

### A. COMPANY DEMOGRAPHICS

A1. The number of employees at this location is:

- a. 25-49
- b. 50-99
- c. 99 or 199
- d. 200 and higher

A2. For employees at this location, roughly what percent are:

- a. Hourly v. salaried \_\_\_\_\_ v. \_\_\_\_\_ (Check that this adds up to 100. If not, ask for clarification)
- b. Part time v. full time \_\_\_\_\_ v. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Male v. female? \_\_\_\_\_ v. \_\_\_\_\_

B. COMPANY PAID SICK TIME POLICY

We would like to know about the types of paid time off your company offers, how much time you offer, and to which employees.

B1. Does your company provide a consolidated time off program, like a Paid Time Off bank that gives the employee a set number of days for purposes that include vacation and sick time? YES\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_ (if no, skip to question #B2) IF YES:

- a. How many days of PTO does an employee get
  - i. After 1 year
  - ii. After 2 years
- b. What is the maximum number of PTO days offered to employees?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. Does this time off policy extend to all or just some employees? ALL\_\_\_\_ SOME\_\_\_\_ IF SOME:
- d. Which types of employees get a PTO bank they can use when they are out sick? All workers who have been with the firm for a year or more \_\_\_\_; full time employees only? \_\_\_\_ Salaried Employees only? \_\_\_\_ Other category? \_\_\_\_ (Check all that apply.)
- e. Is this PTO policy written? \_\_\_\_

B2. Does your company provide vacation days? YES\_\_\_\_ NO\_\_\_\_ (if no, skip to question # B3) IF YES:

- a. How many days of vacation does an employee get
  - i. After 1 year \_\_\_\_
  - ii. After 2 years \_\_\_\_
  - iii. What is the maximum number of vacation days offered to employees? \_\_\_\_
- b. Does this leave policy extend to all or just some employees? ALL\_\_\_\_ SOME\_\_\_\_ IF SOME:
- c. Which types of employees get paid vacation days? All workers who have been with the firm for a year or more \_\_\_\_; full time employees only \_\_\_\_? Salaried Employees only \_\_\_\_? Other category \_\_\_\_? (Respondent may provide other answers. Record all that apply.)
  - i. \_\_\_\_\_

d. Can an employee use vacation days to stay home for a day or two if he or she is sick?

i. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

B3. Does your company provide employees with sick time that is paid ? YES \_\_\_\_\_

NO \_\_\_\_\_ (if no, skip to question #B 4) IF YES:

a. How many days of paid sick time does an employee get in a year

i. After 1 year? \_\_\_\_\_

ii. After 2 years? \_\_\_\_\_

iii. What is the maximum number of paid sick days employees can earn? \_\_\_\_\_

b. Does this sick time policy extend to all or just some employees? ALL \_\_\_\_\_

SOME \_\_\_\_\_

IF SOME EMPLOYEES:

c. Which types of employees get paid sick days?

i. All workers who have been with the firm for a year or more? \_\_\_\_\_

ii. Full time employees only? \_\_\_\_\_

iii. Salaried Employees only? \_\_\_\_\_

iv. Other category? \_\_\_\_\_

(Respondent may provide other answers. Record all that apply.)

d. Is your sick time policy written? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

e. In the past 12 months how many days did the typical employee stay home to recover from a minor illness? \_\_\_\_\_

f. Does your company use a system of 'progressive discipline' (for example, give demerits) when an employee uses his or her paid sick time? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

If YES,

g. Is this system used for all absences or just for unexcused absences? ALL \_\_\_\_\_  
UNEXCUSED \_\_\_\_\_

h. In the past 12 months have any of the employees at this location abused your paid sick time policy? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

B4. You told us that your company does not provide paid sick time; is this something you'd like to be able to provide? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

B5. Does your company provide paid leave for family or medical reasons such as having a baby or recovering from a serious illness such as cancer? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

### **C. EXPERIENCE WITH SICK EMPLOYEES**

Most business have put in place procedures for managing a situation where an employee misses a day or two of work due to a bad cold or stomach virus. We would like to know how you handle such situations.

C1. Can you describe what you do when an employee is out sick for a day or two? What do you do to cover the work?

---

C2. Has your company ever had an employee who came to work sick that you wished had stayed home? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

C3. Have you had an employee come to work sick and spread the illness to other employees? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

### **D. PERSPECTIVES ON EARNED SICK TIME COSTS AND BENEFITS:**

D1. Which of the following two statements is closer to your company's view (pick one):

- a. Over the long run weighing the costs and benefits, letting employees earn paid sick time is more of a benefit because it improves employee morale, increases employee retention, keeps workers healthy, and assures that workers are productive when they are at work.\_\_\_\_\_
- b. Over the long run weighing the costs and benefits, letting workers earn paid sick time is more of a cost since too much money is spent without work being done.\_\_\_\_\_

### **E. INTEREST IN EXPLORING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT (ultimately for CEO or decision maker)**

A number of businesses around the state have already expressed support for legislation that would let employees earn paid sick time. There are a variety of different ways to get involved. We would like to know whether your business would consider joining with other businesses on this issue.

E1. Are you the right person to explore this with ? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

a. If no, the right person is: \_\_\_\_\_

b. And that person's email and phone are: \_\_\_\_\_ ;  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. What is the best way to connect with that person to schedule a brief conversation about joining with other business leaders in support of the legislation?

E2. What is the name of this business? \_\_\_\_\_

E3. What is the business address? \_\_\_\_\_

E4. What is your name? \_\_\_\_\_

E5. Your email address? \_\_\_\_\_

For the correct person/CEO:

1. The state legislature is debating letting workers earn a minimum amount of earned paid sick time (if appropriate add: you already meet that standard). Business leaders are already expressing support for earned paid sick time, including: Dan Wolf, CEO, Cape Air; Paul Eldrenkamp, Owner of Byggmeister Design Build; Rob Everts, Co-Executive Director of Equal Exchange Coffee; and John Abrams, CEO of South Mountain Company. Involvement could mean just signing onto a letter or petition, or could involve speaking to other business leaders, or could mean testifying before the state legislature. You could decide how involved you want to be. Would you consider expressing support in some way if your time allows?
  
2. Here are some ways you might get involved, are there any you definitely would not do?

— **Business Roundtable Discussion:** Participate in a business roundtable sharing ideas on advancing this commonsense policy that promotes productivity and helps the bottom-line.

— **Interact with Media and Elected Officials:** Speak with media representatives or elected officials on your workplace practices to influence other employers; Sign on to support letters

— **Become an Outreach Supporter:** Sign a letter to the legislature or add your name to a letter to editor or op ed

— **Make Introductions to business contacts:** Introduce the campaign to other business owners

— **Sign on:** Sign an E- business support letter and list your business on the Massachusetts Paid Leave Coalition website

#### CONTACT INFO

#### Interviewee Information (Ask only what is not already known from the scheduling call)

1. Name
2. What is your position or job title?
3. Email

#### Business Information (Ask only what is not already known)

1. Business Name
2. Business Address

3. What type of business is this?

Thanks so much for speaking with me. I'll be sharing this confidentially with STATE LEGISLATOR XXX and will also follow up with (person named above as contact regarding their interest in sick leave.)