

## **COVID-19 HR Related Q&A from Harold Ford, Employer Solutions Consulting Manager**

Over the past few weeks, we have received many questions regarding COVID-19 and its impact on the workforce. See below for answers to some of the commonly asked questions to our team:

### **Q: How has CARES Act modified unemployment benefits?**

**A:** The legislation increases the weekly unemployment benefits workers can receive (an extra \$600 a week), extends the amount of time they can receive payments (up to an additional 13 weeks), and expands eligibility to independent contractors, gig workers, and the self-employed.

### **Q: What is the difference between an employee that is furloughed vs. laid off?**

**A:** When an employee is furloughed that person is on a temporary, extended unpaid leave of absence and typically do not receive a paycheck. They are still employed by the employer and when the furlough ends the employee may return to work. When an employee is laid off it means the person is let go from their job. Although a layoff may be temporary, in today's terms a layoff is much more like a termination.

### **Q: If an employee can telework with pay, can they refuse and collect unemployment?**

**A:** No. An employee will not qualify for unemployment benefits if they can work from home. However, depending on circumstance, they may qualify for paid sick leave and paid extended family and medical leave under FFCRA. For example, the employee and employer may agree that the employee can take FFCRA paid leave intermittently while teleworking.