

What is VESSA?	VESSA is the State of Illinois Victims Economic Security and Safety Act that grants employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, gender violence, or any other crime of violence up to 12 workweeks of leave to maintain financial independence necessary to leave abusive situations and to protect the civil and economic rights of employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual violence, gender violence, or any other crime of violence and employees with a family or household member who is a victim.
What constitutes “domestic violence”?	Domestic violence means abuse, as defined in Section 103 of the Illinois Domestic Violence Act of 1986 . Abuse is defined as physical abuse, harassment, intimidation of a dependent, interference with personal liberty or willful deprivation but does not include reasonable direction of a minor child by a parent or person in loco parentis.
What constitutes “sexual violence”?	Sexual violence means “Sexual assault”. Sexual assault is any conduct proscribed by: (i) Article 11 of the Criminal Code of 2012 except Sections 11-35 and 11-45; (ii) Sections 12-13, 12-14, 12-14.1, 12-15, and 12-16 of the Criminal Code of 2012 ; or (iii) a similar provision of the Criminal Code of 1961.
What constitutes “gender violence”?	Gender violence means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one or more acts of violence or aggression satisfying the elements of any criminal offense under the laws of this State that are committed, at least in part, on the basis of a person's actual or perceived sex or gender, regardless of whether the acts resulted in criminal charges, prosecution, or conviction; • a physical intrusion or physical invasion of a sexual nature under coercive conditions satisfying the elements of any criminal offense under the laws of this State, regardless of whether the intrusion or invasion resulted in criminal charges, prosecution, or conviction; or • threat of an act described in the above items causing a realistic apprehension that the originator of the threat will commit the act.
What constitutes “any other crime of violence”?	“Crime of Violence” means any conduct proscribed by Articles 9, 11, 12, 26.5, 29D, and 33A of the Criminal Code of 2012 or a similar provision of Criminal Code 1961, in addition to conduct proscribed by Articles of the Criminal Code of 2012 referenced in other definitions in this document.
Is stalking covered under VESSA?	Yes. “Stalking” means any conduct proscribed by the Criminal Code of 1961 or the Criminal Code of 2012 in Sections 12-7.3, 12-7.4, and 12-7.5.
What are the three events that qualify as an approved VESSA leave?	The three events that qualify as an eligible VESSA event are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To seek medical help and recover from physical or psychological injuries caused by domestic or sexual violence to the employee or employee’s family or household member. ▪ To obtain victim’s services, psychological or other counseling, and legal assistance or remedies, including preparing for or participating in any civil or criminal legal proceeding related to or derived from domestic or sexual violence. ▪ Participate in safety planning, temporarily or permanently relocating, or taking other actions to increase health and safety, or to ensure economic safety of covered persons.
How do you define “household member”?	“Family or household member”, for employees with a family or household member who is a victim of domestic violence, sexual violence, gender violence, or any other crime of violence, means a spouse or party to a civil union, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, sibling, or any other person related by blood or by present or prior marriage or civil union, other person who shares a relationship through a child, or any other individual whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship as determined by the employee, and persons jointly residing in the same household.
How is the VESSA year begin date determined?	The VESSA year begin date is the date of the first VESSA qualifying event in the previous 12 month period for that employee. Each employee will have their own VESSA year begin date based on their qualifying event(s).

How is the VESSA year end date determined?	The VESSA year end date is the same day and month as the VESSA year begin date, one year later.
How does intermittent leave work for VESSA?	Intermittent leave is leave that is taken in separate blocks of time for a single qualifying event. The intermittent leave can be planned or unplanned, and the shortest leave increment is the shortest period of time designated in the payroll system.
Which types of paid leaves can be used to continue in pay status while on VESSA leave?	In order to continue in pay status while on VESSA leave, employees may use the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Vacation Leave ▪ Sick Leave (if also approved in conjunction with FMLA) ▪ Holiday ▪ Floating Holiday
May the employer designate a leave as VESSA leave?	Yes, if the employer has reason to believe that an absence may be due to a VESSA qualifying reason, the employer may designate the leave as VESSA leave. Before doing so, the unit should consult with their university or system human resources office to ensure proper designation and compliance with the law.
Who has the authority to approve or deny a VESSA Leave?	The department human resources representative or applicable human resources office as the authority to approve or deny a VESSA leave. Before denying a leave, the department human resource representative should contact the appropriate university or system office human resource office. If assistance is needed, or there is a disagreement, the department human resource representative should seek guidance from the appropriate university or system office human resource office who will provide assistance to both the employee and the unit.
Are there additional forms or paperwork required by employees or departments to request a VESSA Leave?	Yes, employees are required to submit a VESSA Application to their department human resource representative or system human resource office when requesting VESSA leave. In addition to completing the VESSA application, if the employee is in possession of any supporting documentation, they shall provide it along with the VESSA application. Supporting documentation may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation from the employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim services organization, an attorney, a member of the clergy, or a medical or other professional from whom the employee or the employee's family or household member has sought assistance in addressing domestic violence, or sexual violence, gender violence, or any other crime of violence, and the effects of the violence; or • a police or court record; or • other corroborating evidence.
Are there additional steps employees need to take if there is a serious health injury?	Yes. Certification issued by the employee's or family member's health care provider shall be required to support a request for VESSA leave for a serious health condition as outlined in the Family and Medical Leave policies.
Does VESSA leave run concurrently with FMLA leave, or is it in addition to the 12-week FMLA entitlement?	VESSA leave runs concurrently with FMLA leave when the reason for VESSA leave also qualifies as an FMLA event, such as a serious health condition. If the VESSA leave is taken for reasons other than an FMLA qualifying event, the 12-week VESSA leave entitlement is in addition to the 12-week FMLA entitlement.
If I am eligible for VESSA leave, does that mean I am also eligible for FMLA leave?	No, VESSA leave and FMLA leave have two different eligibility criteria. The only requirement to be eligible for VESSA leave is that you must be a University employee receiving compensation. Based on eligibility criteria, Extra Help employees, students, and Academic Hourlies are eligible for VESSA leave. To be eligible for FMLA leave, you must have worked 1,000 hours in the last 12 months and have worked at the University for one year.

What types of documentation are acceptable to verify VESSA eligibility?	<p>Employees may use any of the following forms of documentation when applying for VESSA leave:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A sworn statement of the employee (completion of the VESSA application with the employee's signature satisfies this requirement); and, if the employee has possession of one of the following, it should also be submitted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Documentation from the employee, agent, or volunteer of a victim services organization, an attorney, a member of the clergy, or a medical or other professional from whom the employee or the employee's family or household member has sought assistance in addressing domestic or sexual violence and the effects of the violence; or ○ A police or court record; or ○ Other corroborating evidence.
How do I know when to count VESSA leave time as also FMLA leave?	<p>If the VESSA leave is for a serious health condition of the employee or employee's immediate family member as defined in the Family and Medical Leave policies, then the leave time should be counted towards both VESSA and FMLA leave. The leave should be tracked on both the PZAELOA and PEAFMLA forms in Banner and the VESSA/FMLA earnings codes should be used. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Vacation ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Vacation (rdg) ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Sick ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Sick (rdg) ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Unpaid ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Unpaid (rdg) ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Holiday ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Holiday (rdg) ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Floating Holiday ▪ FMLA/VESSA Leave Floating Holiday (rdg)
How much notice in advance must an employee give the employer when requesting VESSA leave?	<p>The employee shall provide the supervisor with 48 hours notice in advance, unless providing such notice is not practicable. Certification should be provided within a reasonable period of time after the unscheduled absence occurs.</p>
Which Banner forms are used to track VESSA?	<p>The PZAELOA form will be used to track all relevant dates, leave reasons, and other information related to the leave itself. Actual VESSA hours used will be tracked through the use of Earnings Codes in payroll.</p>
Who enters information about VESSA into Banner?	<p>The Home Department/Unit will track and enter VESSA information on the PZAELOA form in Banner.</p>
How is approval or denial of a VESSA leave reflected in Banner?	<p>There is no way of indicating approval or denial status in Banner for VESSA leave. Units should maintain their own records for these purposes.</p>
If sick leave used is charged toward VESSA, how should data be entered into the system?	<p>Since sick leave can only be used for illness or injury, the use of sick leave for VESSA leave would mean the employee's leave also qualifies as an FMLA event. When entering the sick leave or vacation time used toward FMLA, the <i>FMLA/VESSA Sick</i> or <i>FMLA/VESSA Vacation</i> earnings codes will be selected to designate the leave as FMLA. This allows the time to be appropriately charged to the employee's vacation and/or sick leave balances.</p>

How do I designate VESSA leave in payroll for Civil Service employees?

The following earnings codes are used in payroll to designate a leave as VESSA for Civil Service employees:

- VESSA Leave Vacation
- VESSA Leave Vacation (rdg)
- VESSA Leave Sick
- VESSA Leave Sick (rdg)
- VESSA Leave Unpaid
- VESSA Leave Unpaid (rdg)
- VESSA Leave Holiday
- VESSA Leave Holiday (rdg)
- VESSA Leave Floating Holiday
- VESSA Leave Floating Holiday (rdg)

The following earning codes are used in payroll to designate if the employee is approved for VESSA and FMLA together:

- FMLA/VESSA Leave Vacation
- FMLA/VESSA Leave Vacation (rdg)
- FMLA/VESSA Leave Sick
- FMLA/VESSA Leave Sick (rdg)
- FMLA/VESSA Leave Unpaid
- FMLA/VESSA Leave Unpaid (rdg)
- FMLA/VESSA Leave Holiday
- FMLA/VESSA Leave Holiday (rdg)
- FMLA/VESSA Leave Floating Holiday
- FMLA/VESSA Leave Floating Holiday (rdg)

How do I designate VESSA leave in payroll for Academic Professional employees?

VESSA leave is not recorded in payroll for Academics at this time, it is only recorded in Banner on the PZAELOA form.
