



VERMONT STATE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION

Dear VSEA Office of Defender General Unit Members:

Article 38 Wages:

- Current Language follows NMU/Supervisory Contracts, salary increases would be 2% July 12, 2026, 2% January 10, 2027, 3% July 11, 2027, and continuation of steps.
- The ODJ may request that an existing employee who is promoting to a higher pay grade be hired into range. This would not limit the promotion rate of pay to 5% or 8% since the State often hires new employees into range.
- The ODJ would have the option to raise the rate of pay of similarly experienced current employees in that department and in the same class, to the rate of the newly hired employee when hired into range.

Article 13 Classification Review and Grievance:

- Paragraph 2 change in language renaming “point factor rating” system to “job evaluation” system.

Article 21 Observance of Holidays:

- To mirror negotiated Judicial Unit Holidays which add Juneteenth and Indigenous People’s Day, Bennington Battle Day would no longer be observed.

Article 22 Annual Leave:

- Increase all Annual Leave Accumulation Caps by 20 hours.

Article 23 Sick Leave:

- Section 2(b) Use of sick leave under (2) regarding absence due to a death or illness in the immediate family is moved to ARTICLE 27 renamed “PARENTAL LEAVE/FAMILY/MEDICAL LEAVE
- Section 2(b) Use of sick leave under (4) regarding absence due to a pregnancy related illness is moved to ARTICLE 27 renamed “PARENTAL LEAVE/FAMILY/MEDICAL LEAVE

Article 27 PARENTAL LEAVE/FAMILY LEAVE renamed PARENTAL LEAVE/FAMILY/MEDICAL LEAVE:

Article 27 has been revised to integrate the basic leave requirements provided by the federal Family Medical Leave Act, Vermont’s Parental and Family Leave Act, and the ODJ Bargaining Unit contract. A copy of the revised Article 27 is attached. A few of those provisions are listed below.

- The definition of “Family Member” and the reasons for the use of leave are now listed as defined in statute.
- An employee is entitled to a total of twelve (12) weeks of unpaid statutory Family/Medical Leave and/or statutory Parental Leave within a twelve (12) month period beginning the first day either Leave is used. At the employee’s option the employee may use up to twelve (12) weeks of any earned compensatory hours, accrued paid leave, including, but not limited to, sick leave, annual leave, personal leave or short-term disability insurance.
- Use of leave for an absence due to the death of a family member is now defined as BEREAVEMENT LEAVE in compliance with state statute.
- The Bereavement Leave section provides that an employee may take up to two (2) weeks during the twelve (12) weeks provided in a twelve (12) month period due to the death of a family member. The employee may use any type of accrued leave. Leave may be taken in relation to the administration or settlement of the deceased family member’s estate within one (1) year after the family member’s death.
- The Bereavement Leave section also provides that should an employee exhaust their statutory entitlement of two weeks of Bereavement Leave, up to ten (10) days of sick leave may be authorized due to a death in their immediate family.



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Article 36 PERSONAL LEAVE AS SICK LEAVE INCENTIVE renamed "PERSONAL LEAVE":

- Personal Leave accrual would no longer be connected to sick leave usage
- ODJ employees would receive 10 hours of Personal Leave during the first full pay period of each fiscal quarter
- Employees entitled to accrue a rolling cap of 20 hours, however, would not receive additional Personal Leave until below the cap prior to the next quarter. This is the same rule as pay period accrual of annual leave when reaching the accrual maximum.

Article 41 State Health and Dental Plans:

Current language mirrors NMU Health and Dental which includes the following changes:

- The Vision Benefit currently has a maximum of \$100 every two years and effective January 1, 2027, the maximum benefit will increase to \$200 annually.
- Effective July 1, 2026, the maximum lifetime orthodontia benefit (Class IV Dental Services) per individual will increase from \$1,750 to \$3,750.
- Effective July 1, 2026, the maximum amount payable for each individual for Class I, II, and III dental services during a plan year shall increase from \$1,000 to \$2,000.
- Effective July 1, 2026, there shall be no deductible for any dental services.

The Office of Defender General Unit bargaining team is pleased with the outcome of negotiations and recommends ratification of this tentative agreement for our next contract. Please VOTE.....Your Voice Matters.