**Archbright™**

**Insights Newsletter**

**December 2021**

**Introducing the New Management Academy**

Our team has been hard at work creating an all-new Management Academy for 2022! Designed for seasoned managers, this course is once again a cohort learning program, bringing together participants from a variety of industries and range of professional experiences to share learning on a deeper level.

The program consists of six modules that take place over six weeks. Participants attend class one half-day per week, providing an opportunity to put learned skills into action before returning to discuss results with the cohort. The modules in this program include:

* Defining Myself
* Managing Myself
* Understanding Others
* Developing a Team
* Building a Business Case
* Implementing Change

Our new curriculum weaves emotional intelligence throughout each module, encouraging leaders to leverage their strengths while focusing on their employees’ strengths. This allows for customized employee communication to lead to even greater results. Participants will also explore how to build and present a business case, a skill that all leaders need but few have ever learned. The balance between soft skills and tangible business practices makes this course invaluable for experienced leaders.

The new Management Academy is an ideal next step for experienced managers who have already taken Supervisory Skills or Management Fundamentals and want to continue their development. Plus, participants who have taken the Management Academy in previous years will also benefit from this all-new curriculum!

We are excited to share this course with you! Registration is now open for our February 2022 session. To find out more, visit Archbright.com.

**The Year That Never Was…and Yet it Was Quite a Year!**

2020 and the pandemic it brought with it seemed like a year that would never end. And as we continue on, 2021 seems to me the year that never was. As I reflect on the year as a leader it both feels like nothing changed (COVID-19 is still wreaking havoc) and everything’s changed (remote work, vaccine mandates, and The Great Resignation…or as I like to call it, Talent Musical Chairs).

For Archbright, it certainly was a busy year. We welcomed another 291 members, bringing Archbright membership to a community of 1,965 employers in the Pacific Northwest. You are in good company! And, in case you missed it, here are some of the additional highlights:

* We launched mozzo (our online platform) and its companion mobile app—designed to connect members to our expert HR and safety resources and to each other. It includes:
  + Advisor Chat with our experienced HR and Safety Advisors
  + An online Community to connect with other members and our experts
  + Job Description Builder to develop and save job descriptions
  + Handbook Builder to produce a compliant employee handbook
  + Video Training Library to view, assign, and share microlearnings
  + Resource Library including hundreds of HR, Safety, and Compliance resources
  + Claims Tracker to view status of the workers’ compensation claims we manage for your company
* We launched a new workers’ compensation service called Archbright ReClaim to help members lower their workers’ compensation premiums through effective claims management and proven safety practices. Each year, the best performing participants receive a portion or full service fee refund (and potentially an additional bonus!) as a reward for reducing claims costs.
* We conducted a Regional Pay Survey (actually, we do this EVERY year…but current talent wars make it an even more important resource) that covers Washington and Oregon that includes benchmarking for 527 jobs from 553 participating employers. If you are budgeting for pay increases in 2022, this is a resource you must have!

We hope you can take advantage of all of the above in 2022, along with the many services you already access. Please let us know how we can support you in the coming year. And in the meantime, on behalf of your entire Archbright team...we wish you the happiest of holidays and a prosperous new year!

**Have You Checked Out mozzo Recently?**

There are a lot of changes in mozzo—the Dashboard Newsfeed, the State Law Compare Tool, new videos in the Video Training Library, and new resources in the Resource Library. If you have not yet had an opportunity to look, now is a great time to do so!

This time of year can be busy as your organization reviews and revisits its policies. mozzo’s Resource Library is a great place to start. And make sure to check out the Dashboard Newsfeed for HR and employment law news from across the country. New articles are posted daily. Plus, our easy-to-use State Law Compare Tool helps members with employees in multiple states quickly compare state and federal laws by topic and create a downloadable chart. We hope these help you as the end of the year approaches!

If there are any resources you’d like to see added to mozzo, let us know at info@archbright.com.

**Wellspring EAP: A Special Offer for Archbright Members**

Are you looking to add an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to your employee benefits package? Archbright is excited to partner with Wellspring EAP, a division of Wellspring Family Services, and a member of Archbright to offer you a discount!

Qualifying Archbright members who purchase an EAP program with Wellspring receive a 5% discount and 5 hours of Critical Incident Stress Management Services (CISM) annually. Members who are already using Wellspring EAP are not eligible for this promotion. Also, member companies must have at least 50 employees to qualify for a Wellspring EAP.

If you’re interested in learning more, please reach out to Wellspring at 1-855-282-3109   
or sales@wellspringeap.org.

Wellspring Family Services is a 128-year-old PNW based nonprofit 501(c)(3) agency working to end the cycle of homelessness for families in our region. They provide financial support to Wellspring Family Services’ community impact program, which helps thousands of children and families rebuild their lives in our community.

By utilizing Wellspring EAP, not only do you benefit from their excellent and comprehensive program, you also help support our community.

**Ending 2021 with Ethics in Mind**

Effective January 1, 2021, the HR Certification Institute (HRCI) implemented a new ethics requirement for candidates seeking to earn the Professional in Human Resources or Senior Professional in Human Resources (PHR/SPHR) designation. Now candidates must fulfill one ethics credit to receive any HRCI certification. HR professionals have significant influence over the ethical practices within their organizations and are responsible for holding employees accountable for their ethical behavior, so this is not only good practice, it’s also good business.

According to the Ethics Resource Center, 45% of workers observe unethical or illegal behavior while on the job each year. Some of these acts will create immediate, significant problems for employers, while others begin as minor and snowball into large, out-of-control situations.

Employees are faced with dozens of decisions every day. Archbright University is here to guide their decision-making in the right direction with our class, Tackling Ethical Issues. This 3-hour class, which is pre-approved for HRCI credits and meets the ethics requirement, gives participants the information, tools, and practice they need to make the best decisions in the workplace—for themselves, their companies, and their customers. Employees will feel empowered to take the ethical path and be accountable to others for these decisions.

After completing this class, participants will be able to:

* Recognize unethical behavior
* Express ethical concerns constructively
* Manage ethical dilemmas where there is not a clear answer
* Demonstrate respect and take responsibility to drive results

For more information about providing ethics training to your employees, please contact your Archbright Account Executive or info@archbright.com.

**Top 10 Year-End HR Tasks to Prepare for 2022**

Believe it or not, the end of 2021 is right around the corner, and before you know it, we will be celebrating the start of a new year. As many HR professionals and other business leaders know, this is a critical time to ensure compliance with changing laws and review existing HR practices and records before turning attention to new workplace challenges that will inevitably come. Here’s a run-down of some year-end tasks to help you ring in 2022:

1. Review personnel records and encourage employees to update or verify their information, including mailing addresses, phone numbers, emergency contacts, and beneficiaries for 401(k) and life insurance.
2. Update your OSHA log. Most employers with over ten employees must maintain a record of serious work-related injuries and illnesses on the OSHA Form 300. The summary of the log, Form 300A, must be posted from February 1 to April 30 of each year. Many employers will also need to electronically submit their Form 300A to OSHA using the Injury Tracking Application (ITA) by March 2.
3. Check your workplace posters and ensure they are up to date. If you have employees working remotely, consider posting virtual notices that all employees can access. For more details on workplace posters, reference the *Federal and State Required Posters Keynote* in the mozzo Resource Library.
4. Verify EEO records. “Scrub” your HRIS or other systems to confirm that employee race, gender, and job categories are complete and up to date. Employers who are required to submit EEO-1 information must submit their data by March 31.
5. Double-check the salary threshold for exempt employees to ensure it meets federal and state minimum requirements. Ensure hourly pay for non-exempt employees meets any relevant state and local minimum wage threshold.
6. Audit sick leave accrual and rollover amounts for employees subject to a state or local sick leave law.
7. Review HR forms to confirm you’re using the latest versions—for example, W-4s, I-9s, and FMLA forms.
8. Consult with a payroll or tax professional to ensure compliance with new requirements such as the Seattle payroll expense tax. This new tax impacts Seattle employers with $7 million or more in payroll expenses.
9. Update or add new payroll deduction amounts. New insurance plans, different coverage rates, and increased Washington Paid Family and Medical Leave (WPFML) premiums require a payroll deduction update. Begin deducting for WA Cares Fund for employees who have not provided proof of an exemption.
10. Update your employee handbook. Archbright recommends updating handbooks every year as many local, state, and federal laws and best practices change frequently. Gold and Silver members receive a free HR and Legal handbook review annually as part of their membership.

There may be more year-end tasks specific to your workplace or industry. Archbright members are encouraged to contact the HR Hotline with any questions or to seek additional guidance. In addition, many keynotes, sample policies, forms, and other resources are available in the mozzo Resource Library for download.

**Changes to State and Local Minimum Wage Amounts Coming January 1**

As employers prepare for the new year, it’s important to remember that the minimum wage for Washington State and local cities will increase on January 1, 2022. The Washington State Department of Labor and Industries (L&I) announced that the state’s new minimum wage of $14.49/hour will take effect on January 1, 2022. This amount is a 5.83% increase to the current minimum wage. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, this year’s minimum wage increases are a result of the rising cost of gas, housing, food, and other household goods.

The City of Seattle will also be increasing the minimum wage to $17.27/hour for large employers with 501 or more employees. Small Seattle employers with 500 or fewer employees that do not contribute at least $1.52/hour toward medical benefits, or their employees earn less than $1.52/hour in tips, are also subject to the new $17.27/hour minimum wage. Small Seattle employers who contribute at least $1.52/hour towards medical benefits or their employees earn at least $1.52/hour in tips are subject to a $15.75/hour minimum wage.

In accordance with the Employment Standards Ordinance, the City of SeaTac has also announced an increase to the minimum wage for hospitality and transportation workers to $17.54/hour.

The salary threshold for employees to qualify as overtime-exempt in Washington is increasing as well. Effective January 1, 2022, the new threshold is 1.75 times the minimum wage, which equates to a weekly salary of $1,014.30 and an annual salary of $52,743.60.

Further, under RCW 49.62.040, L&I is adjusting the required salary thresholds for both employees and independent contractors for a non-compete agreement to be enforceable. The salary thresholds for 2022 are $107,301.04 for employees and $268,252.59 for independent contractors.

These changes may have end-of-year practical implications for employers. Many employers review compensation systems and levels at year’s end. This review may include updating their HRIS/payroll system to reflect these wage and/or salary increases, posting current minimum wage posters and required notices, and confirming non-compete agreements are only issued to those who earn more than the new threshold. Employers must communicate these changes to the impacted employee(s).

With these increases to the minimum wages and the salary thresholds, employers should determine if these changes have resulted in wage compression issues. Employers may consider raising other employees’ wages or salaries to maintain established pay differentials.

Members are encouraged to contact the HR Hotline with any questions concerning these changes.

**HR FAQ - Question:** Our company gives employees December 24 and 25 off as paid holidays. We had several employees call in sick on December 26. Our policy states that employees must work the day before and after a holiday to receive holiday pay. Do I have to approve their PTO request for December 26?

Answer: It depends. Employers may have a policy that requires an employee to work the day before or after the holiday to be eligible for the benefit. However, before enforcing such policies, employers should know that withholding holiday pay because an employee exercised their lawful right to use protected sick leave may be retaliation. Any absence protected by local, state, or federal law (i.e., paid sick leave, FMLA, ADA, etc.) must be “excused.” Therefore, the employer must pay for any applicable holiday pay.

So, if an employee says they are sick, their child is sick, or they have a doctor’s appointment, then, yes—you’d have to pay them. If, however, an employee gives a reason for the absence that is not covered by sick leave, FMLA, or ADA, such as their flight got canceled, or their car wouldn’t start, then, no—you would not have to pay them. Before withholding pay or administering discipline, ensure you have proper documentation about the reason for the absence.

**Get to Know the Archbright University Team!**

Archbright University’s mission is to provide relevant training that is on target with member needs. We host hundreds of classes a year to help your employees develop their skills, improve processes, and gain new knowledge. We wouldn’t be able to provide you with these resources without our Archbright University team, who works tirelessly not just to lead courses, but also develop new ones that are relevant and helpful to our members.

As we close out another incredible year for Archbright University, we would like to recognize and introduce our Archbright University team, so that the next time you take an Archbright University course, you know a little more about the instructor teaching it before you \*walk\* into the virtual classroom.

Amy Bachmann | Amy Bachmann, M.Ed., is the Director of Sales and Training at Archbright. She leads the Archbright University team of Senior Learning & Development Consultants responsible for designing and delivering cutting-edge course curriculum. She also leads Archbright’s team of Account Executives in serving our members with their needs in all services. Amy joined Archbright in 2019 and has more than 20 years of experience in adult education in a variety of industries, including academia, the medical field, and non-profit organizations. She holds a Master’s in Education from the University of San Diego, with a focus in Curriculum Design.

Rita Carson | Rita Carson, SPHR, CPTD, is a Senior Consultant with Archbright University and facilitates over 30 professional development and management classes, including the Management Academy. In her role, she also updates course materials and helps develop new courses. Rita has facilitated leadership learning experiences within various industries for over 20 years. She earned the Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) designation in 2009 from the HR Certification Institute, and in 2010 she earned the Certified Professional in Talent Development (CPTD) credential from the Association for Talent Development certification institute.

Tom Norwood | Tom Norwood is a Senior Learning & Development Consultant at Archbright who has been developing trainings and facilitating groups for over 20 years. He has a Master’s in Divinity from Fuller Theological Seminary, and a Bachelor’s in Liberal Studies from Sonoma State University. He designed and launched the Contemplative Leaders in Action cohort at Seattle University in 2012. In 2007 he won the Harriet B. Stephenson Annual Business Plan Completion at Seattle University.

Katie Chase | Katie Chase is a Senior Consultant in Learning and Development with Archbright University. She’s been teaching and facilitating educational experiences for almost 20 years with extensive work in leadership development, self-management, and effective communication. She is a vocalist and mandolin player with a Bachelor of Music from Oberlin Conservatory and has an MBA from Presidio Graduate School. She’s currently completing an executive coaching certification with the International Coach Federation, and lives in Seattle, WA.

Yunjee Um | Yunjee Um is an Instructional Content Creator with Archbright University. She works with Archbright’s subject matter experts to design animated instructional videos and works closely with Archbright University consultants to develop and update curriculums. Previously, she was in event planning where she developed her design experience. She received her BA in Digital Technology and Culture from Washington State University.

**We’re continually adding classes to the 2022 Archbright University course calendar on our website! Register for classes at Archbright.com!**

**COVID-19 Related Workers’ Compensation Claims in Washington Continue to Grow**

As the number of COVID-19 related cases continues to increase, Archbright has compiled a list of some of the top questions asked of our HR and Safety Advisors and Washington Labor and Industries (L&I).

Q: Can a worker file a workers’ compensation claim for COVID-19?

A: Yes. However, L&I requires an accident report showing that the individual had work-related exposure before the claim is allowed.

Q: Can a worker file a workers’ compensation claim for a reaction to a COVID-19 vaccine?

A: Yes, but there is no presumption of coverage. A claim will be allowed if there is an employer requirement, government order, rule, or other law that requires vaccination as a condition of employment.

Q: If a claim is allowed for a reaction to the vaccine, is the worker entitled to time-loss?

A: Yes. However, unlike COVID-19 claims, a worker will not be paid for the first three days after receiving the vaccine unless the worker is medically required to remain off work for 14 days or more.

Q: Will an allowed vaccine reaction claim impact the employer’s future insurance rates?

A: No. Organizations insured by L&I will not have their experience rate impacted by these claims. Self-insured organizations can deduct the costs associated with these claims from their total claim reported costs used for assessment purposes.

Q: Do employers need to record COVID-19 cases on their OSHA 300 Log?

A: Maybe. If the worker gets COVID-19 because of their work-related duties and the case meets all recordkeeping requirements, the employer must record it as an illness on the log. Recordkeeping requirements include:

An approved laboratory test confirms COVID-19

The case is work-related

The case meets at least one of the following criteria—treatment beyond first aid, days away from work, restricted work, loss of consciousness, death, or a significant illness diagnosed by a Health Care Provider

Q: Can “home tests” be used to confirm COVID-19 cases for the OSHA 300 Log?

A: No. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) refers to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), stating that a “confirmed case” is established by using an approved SARS-CoV-2 RNA molecular amplification detection laboratory test. Most home tests are antigen tests and do not meet these requirements. If an employee uses a home test and tests positive, or if their home test is negative, but they still have symptoms, they should follow up with their Health Care Provider to seek molecular testing for confirmation.

The answers to these questions may differ for different states. Eligible members are encouraged to reach out with additional questions using the Archbright HR and Safety Hotlines or mozzo Advisor Chat features.

**Archbright’s Wholesale, Retail, and Professional Services Retro Group Dominates with a 53% Refund!**

Archbright’s Wholesale, Retail, and Professional Service retro program received industry-leading refunds in 2021. Archbright started the group in 2018 to give members the opportunity to earn a refund on their workers’ compensation insurance premiums. Since the group’s inception, it has averaged over 40% annually on refunds for its participants!

Want a piece of the pie? If you are a company in the wholesale, retail, or professional services industry and do not currently participate in the Archbright program, contact Tim Lundin, Director of Safety & Loss Control, at TLundin@Archbright.com. Tim can help you learn more about how your company could be taking advantage of this program and get industry-leading refunds as well.