

ANTIGUA & BARBUDA WORKERS' UNION

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

The Antigua & Barbuda Workers' Union is particularly concerned with the dislocating and negative impact the Corona Virus (COVID-19) is beginning to have and will continue to have into the foreseeable future, on workers in particular and our employers and Government in general.

Consequently, it is important that the Government should, in the interest of working people and other disadvantaged members of society, approach all the financial institutions in the State of Antigua & Barbuda to seek some relief in the form of loan payment deferral and other standing order arrangements. Additionally, the Antigua & Barbuda Workers' Union is requesting that Government moves to relax payments on ALL Utilities.

The Antigua & Barbuda Workers' Union is also requesting landlords to defer or reduce rental payments to their tenants particularly those who have been or will be placed on a shortened work week or lay-off during this time.

In this time of uncertainty and in established cases of necessity, employers would be advised to schedule workers on a shortened work week. Others could be allowed to proceed on vacation leave with pay which is due or outstanding.

Reg. Office: Freedom Hall, Newgate Street, St. John's, Antigua W.I.

ALL CORRESPONDENCE MUST BE ADDRESSED TO THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Where all other reasonable and acceptable options have been exhausted, only then will workers be placed on lay-off.

There is no doubting the need for the Union to work in tandem with the Government and employers in this time of grave uncertainty and difficulty.

In reference specifically to the Hotel Industry, the Union is further requesting that workers who have been placed on lay-off, that the employers should pay the workers an agreed percentage of their weekly/monthly salary for an agreed period. Thereafter, should the lay-off continue, no more than 50% of the employee's/employer's Thrift Fund contributions standing in each employees account, be released from the Fund to the laid-off employees on terms to be agreed upon to assist in alleviating hardship.

Further, the Hoteliers should ensure that the contributions of both employer and employee are paid into the medical insurance fund at State Insurance Corporation on behalf of the employees on lay-off to avoid a possible lapse of the Insurance.

In situations where it becomes unavoidable or absolutely necessary to lay-off an employee with immediate effect, the Union would be amenable to relaxing the Notice Pay provisions.

As the situation unfolds and God-forbid worsens, the Antigua & Barbuda Workers' Union will avail itself of the opportunity to work with Government and employers to ensure stability and civility in Antigua and Barbuda.

End.