



Next Level Strategies

## We Focus on HR so You Can Focus on Your Business

415.876.NEXT



We write this newsletter with heavy hearts. There is plenty to mourn with 124,000 Americans dead from CV-19, the subsequent economic fallout for small businesses, and the pervasive racial injustice and police brutality throughout our nation, which have left us shocked and upset.

Our hearts go out to everyone who has suffered the effects of racism and prejudice in this country.

The foundation of an effective HR person's job is to ensure fairness and equality at work; to help all of you hire and retain the very best employees, regardless of demographic characteristics. Bias exists in all of us since the Stone Age and we strive to counteract innate bias. For example, we do first round interviews over the phone so we can't see the person we're interviewing and can listen to their answers with open minds. This is a small, small drop in a big, historic, systemic bucket of institutional racism, but it's something we can personally do to move society forward. We encourage you to do the same. Other ideas are to create a diversity committee to review internal policies and processes; add diversity and equality statements to your mission statement and company values; and train employees on diversity, inclusion and civility initiatives. We can help you think of other ideas so please reach out.

We have never, and will never, condone employment-related discrimination by our clients toward employees or candidates, and we will always support you to be fair and just leaders. You have our word on that.

### Employer Roadmap for the New Normal

Comprehensive Guidebook Providing Solutions to Employers' COVID-Related Challenges, Full of Useful Tools with Live Links for Managing the Complexities of Communicating with Employees.

[Click here to purchase the Complete COVID-19 Employer Guide!](#)



## Complete COVID-19 EMPLOYER GUIDE

### Employer Roadmap for the New Normal

Comprehensive Guidebook Providing Solutions to Employers' COVID-Related Challenges, Full of Useful Tools with Live Links for Managing the Complexities of Communicating with Employees.

#### Two Options Available

##### Customized: \$1,900

Includes a 30-minute call, customization of the Guide, and a follow up consultation call to walk through Guidebook usage.

##### Basic: \$1,500

A DIY version you'll customize, using highlighted text as a guide.

#### To Purchase or Schedule a Demo

Call: 415.876.NEXT  
Email: [joy@nextlevelstrategies.net](mailto:joy@nextlevelstrategies.net)  
Website: [nextlevelstrategies.net](http://nextlevelstrategies.net)

#### Who We Are & What We Do

Next Level Strategies provides tactical and strategic support for all areas of HR Operations. We provide high touch, high quality, high value HR, strategic planning, recruiting and products to small and mid-sized businesses in any industry.



#### Programs, Leaves & Benefits

Employer and Employee Resources and Programs  
COVID-Related Visual Decision Making Tools

#### Handbook Policies

New and Updated Employee Handbook Policies  
Communicable Disease, FCRA, Remote Work, Workers Comp

#### EPSL & EFMLA

Step by Step Written Process & Required Documentation  
Request Forms, Documentation Checklist, Employee Communication

#### Employee Correspondence

Templates for Managing Communication with Employees  
Scenario-Based Emails & Letters to Simply Cut and Paste

#### Return to Work

Detailed Outline of Employer Considerations – Staffing, Health & Safety, Employee Relations, Required Paperwork, Social Distancing Protocol

## Remote Work

1. **STIPENDS:** This keeps coming up! I have shared several times and many of you still aren't giving stipends to employees who are working from home. California [Labor Code Section 2802](#), stipulates that an employee is entitled to be reimbursed by their employer "for all necessary expenditures or losses incurred by the employee in direct consequence of the discharge of his or her duties." Thus, California employees must be reimbursed for business-related expenses, such as tools and equipment, materials, training, business travel, uniforms, **use of employee's personal vehicle, cellphones, WIFI, and electricity to name some of the more prevalent items.**

Employers don't have to necessarily reimburse 100% of expenses. If the actual cost of an employee's cellphone use for work cannot be determined—for example, if an employee has an unlimited plan—the employer is required to reimburse the employee for a "reasonable percentage" of the personal cellphone bill.

Employers must maintain all records relating to employees' requests for expense reimbursements for a period of three years.

2. **POLICIES:** Most people love to work from home! At the suggestion of an employee-side employment attorney colleague, it would be smart to put in writing to employees that working from home is temporary, so an expectation of permanency isn't created. If employees are in vulnerable populations or living with people in vulnerable populations, they should be able to get a note from a physician indicating the same. If a note is proffered, they should be granted an accommodation in most cases. If you don't think an accommodation is warranted, consult your employment attorney or us to discuss further.

3. **ERGONOMICS:** A well-respected colleague of ours, Diversified Management Group (DMG), is providing virtual ergonomic training and assessments for those who have employees working from home. The training can be on demand or live webinar and really focuses on the home setting and the challenges faced (working on a coffee table or dining room table, no adjustability, etc.) They have also had great success with virtual evaluations and being able to help more individually with those having pain. They totally

get that most employers do not want to buy equipment for something temporary like this, so they are careful to not set up false hope for the employees, but still able to help them know what to target and what to avoid. Depending on the volume of employees, the on-demand training is in the ballpark of \$25 per employee.

## Unlawful Harassment Prevention Training Offerings

The mandatory unlawful harassment training date has been pushed out to December 31, 2020. All of our unlawful harassment training versions have diversity, inclusion and civility modules in them so doing them sooner rather than later could be useful for your company.

We offer various options to conduct the unlawful harassment prevention trainings:

**Prerecorded**  
**Live Webinar**  
**Live In-Person**

\*The prerecorded option is only \$25 per employee and \$45 per manager. Offered in both English and Spanish.

RSVP to Joy Vail, 415.876.NEXT or [joy@nextlevelstrategies.net](mailto:joy@nextlevelstrategies.net) to reserve your space.

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**415.876.NEXT or [joy@nextlevelstrategies.net](mailto:joy@nextlevelstrategies.net) to reserve your space.**

\$139 per session or \$250 for both sessions

In-person workshops by appointment  
onsite at your location!

## San Francisco clients who are recruiting, please note...

A client informed us that the San Francisco Office of Labor Standards Enforcement (OLSE) called them over the Memorial Day weekend (?!) to warn them that their job posting didn't include the required San Francisco Fair Chance Ordinance language. The following is the language to include. The first sentence isn't required but we prefer it. "We are an equal opportunity employer and welcome diversity in the workplace. Pursuant to the San Francisco Fair Chance Ordinance, we will consider for employment, qualified applicants with arrest and conviction records."

## Symptoms and Temperature Checks

Very important! If you are doing



employee temperature checks, make sure of the following:

1. Employees are paid for their time to wait in line and get their temperatures checked. There are already compliance issues with non-payment, and the plaintiff's attorneys are gearing up for more. This must be paid time!
2. While waiting in line, employees must stand at least six feet apart.
3. We suggest a "temperature check employee notice" which is optional unless your revenue is \$25 million or more and then it's mandatory.

Current CDC and EEOC guidance on COVID-19 indicate that employers may ask employees who report feeling ill at work, or who call in sick, questions about their symptoms to determine if they have or may have COVID-19. These symptoms include, for example, fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat.

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## Minimum Wage Increases

On July 1, 2020, minimum wage increases take effect in 13 California cities, eight here in the Bay Area. Updated minimum wage postings are required by July 1, at each worksite. Links are below. Most have posters available in a variety of languages and several have mandatory Covid posters on the same page as the minimum wage posters.



**Alameda**: \$15.00 an hour

**Berkeley**: \$16.07 an hour

**Emeryville**: \$16.84 an hour

**Fremont (26+ employees)**: \$15.00 an hour

**Fremont (25< employees)**: \$13.50 an hour

**Milpitas**: \$15.40 an hour

**Novato (100+ employees)**: \$15.00 an hour

**Novato (26-99 employees)**: \$14.00 an hour

**Novato (25< employees)**: \$13.00 an hour

**San Francisco:** \$16.07 an hour  
**San Leandro:** \$15.00 an hour



Paid Family Leave (administered through the EDD for employers of all sizes) and the related Paid Parental Ordinance (for San Francisco Employers with 20 or more employees) both increase benefit duration on July 1, from six weeks to eight weeks. Claims must start after July 1 to take advantage of the increase. An updated PPLO poster is required for San Francisco employers and updated pamphlets are required for all employers for the Paid Family Leave benefit beginning 7/1/20. However, the OLSE isn't ready with a new poster. Please check their website for updates. [PPLO Poster Eventually Found Here](#). [Order or Download EDD Forms](#).

## Mandatory Retirement Savings Program

In California, a new state-run workplace retirement savings program, CalSavers, opened July 1, 2019. Like other state-run retirement programs spreading across the U.S., CalSavers features an automatic payroll deduction into an individual retirement account (IRA) for the 7.5 million California workers with no employer-provided retirement plan.

**For businesses with five or more employees, the program is mandatory.** The three-year phased rollout will include staggered deadlines for registration based on employer size. You must offer employees CalSavers or a qualified retirement plan chosen by you to avoid a penalty of \$750 per employee.

All eligible employers are encouraged to join at any time prior to their registration deadline which is:

- More than 100 employees: June 30, 2020
- More than 50 employees: June 30, 2021
- 5 or more employees: June 30, 2022

Additional information can be found here:

[Preparing for Calsavers](#)

[Calsavers](#)

[Calsavers FAQs](#)

NLS has its own inexpensive 401(k). We found a provider that groups smaller companies together and allows them to fee-share. If you'd like the contact information, we're happy to provide it.

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## Our Mailing Address

Our not-so-new mailing address is 1155-C Arnold Dr. #249 Martinez, CA 94553.

Please let your accounting group know to send invoice payments and other correspondence to this address if you haven't done so already. Thank you!



## Austin and New York Assistance

As a reminder, our Austin, Texas, office is up and running, with Taune Lima heading that office. We have a consultant in New York City as well. If you have employees in these areas, we're happy to support them as well as your California employees.

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## Client Spotlight

This month's Client Spotlight:  
**Diversified Management Group**

We are consistently impressed by our clients and the services, products and care they offer, and we want to spread the word about them.

Their goal is to create positive solutions resulting in cost savings and legal compliance for employers and insurers, while at the same time help employees stay on the job and continue to work productively, in a safe and healthy manner.

DMG is offering terrific virtual ergonomics assessments. Please see more above under "Remote Work."

[DMG's Website Link](#)





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Visit our website

