

**HRA-ECI**

**December 2021**

DECEMBER  
MEETING

Friday, December 10th  
11:30am—1:00 pm  
Firefly

# 2021 Christmas Party!

Join us for our first 2021 in-person gathering to celebrate the year coming to a close and rewarding ourselves for staying afloat during some trying times with the pandemic.

We will be doing our usual Christmas gathering at the Firefly Grill in Effingham located at 1810 Avenue of Mid-America, Effingham, IL 62401. Make sure you bring your business cards as we are also bringing back our Christmas gift give away.

We are planning to go back to in-person meetings for 2022, so membership forms and payments will start being accepted for the new year.

## Ask an Expert: Religious Holidays

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides employees with protections for their sincerely held religious beliefs, including time off to observe religious holidays as long as it doesn't create an undue hardship for the employer. This means employers with 15 or more employees must provide reasonable accommodations for workers who wish to observe religious holidays and with Christmas around the corner, it brings to mind other holidays observed by other religions and cultures.

The EEOC's definition of religion is 'not only traditional, organized religions, but also includes beliefs that are new, uncommon, no part of a formal church or sect, only subscribed to by a small number of people, or that seem illogical or unreasonable to others.' The broad definition of religion makes it seem employers don't have much room to question whether the religious holiday request is that of a sincerely held belief, but there is some room if an employer has a bona fide doubt to make a limited inquiry into the request before responding to the employee.

Another thing for an employer to consider before responding is if the approved request would create undue hardship on the business. Some things to consider are:

- ◇ Cost
- ◇ Workplace safety
- ◇ Workplace efficiency
- ◇ Infringement of rights of other employees
- ◇ Requires other employees to perform more than their share of burdensome or hazardous work

Source: SHRM *Ask an Expert: Religious Holidays* by Barbara J. Holland, SHRM-CP

## Revised 2022 Salary Increase Budgets Head Toward 4%

In midyear 2021, most salary increase projections were anticipating a 3-3.2% hike for 2022 but things have since changed.

The Conference Board released new salary estimates for budgeting purposes listing the anticipated increase to be 3.9%. This is the highest growth rate since 2008.

Due to the likely continuance of labor shortages, overall wage growth is likely to remain above 4%. This struggle combined with inflation and trying to handle wage compression of your existing work force has forced the hand of some sizable increases and projections for next year.

Even with the inflation, pay compression, and tight labor market, merit increase projections should still be considered preliminary for 2022 as a lot can change in a short time, so tread lightly for your specific organization's needs.

~Source: SHRM *Revised 2022 Salary Increase Budgets Head Toward 4%* by Stephen Miller, CEBS

## 2021—The Most Popular Christmas Gifts

- Portable Campfire
- 3-in-1 Apple Charging Station
- EcoSmart Sweatshirt
- Lightweight Medium Crossbody Bag with Tassel
- Celestial Constellation Necklace
- Temperature Control Smart Mug
- Knit Cuffed Beanie
- Name Earrings
- 100 Movies Scratch Off Poster
- Live Bonsai Tree
- Moon Lamp
- Personalized tall tumblers with straws
- Echo Dot 4th Gen
- Roku Express 4K+
- The Original Reversible Octopus Plushie
- Custom Form Playset
- Artie 3000 The Coding Robot
- Sleep Aid Device
- All-Access Class Subscription (Master Class)
- Shiatsu Back and Neck Massager
- Urban Map Glass
- 11-in-1 Survival Credit Card Multitool
- Make your own Hot Sauce kit
- New York Times customer birthday book
- Home office Lap Desk

Source: Good Housekeeping *The 25 most Popular Christmas Gifts You Can Buy Your Friends and Family in 2021* by Cassidy Olsen.

