



Planning a November 20, 2021 Action on Paid Sick Days at Grocery Stores

Background: Grocery store workers are one of the best examples of why Virginia needs a paid sick day standard. Two thirds of grocery store workers have no paid sick days even though these workers interact with people and handle food and grocery stores have thrived during the pandemic. Some stores have offered COVID-19 leave during the pandemic, but still do not offer a regular paid sick day policy so people can take off if they have a regular flu or illness or if they need to care for a sick child.

Overall Goals: Virginians for Paid Sick Days is partnering with UFCW Local 400 to hold actions outside grocery stores the Saturday of November 20, 2021 (the Saturday before Thanksgiving) highlighting the need for all grocery store workers to have paid sick days. All actions will be short, fun, social-distancing safe. Through the actions, we will:

- 1) highlight the importance of Virginia having a paid sick day standard – showing that even most grocery store workers don't have paid sick days despite handling food and interacting with the public.
- 2) generate statewide traditional and social media about the issue.

Stores: The actions will focus on Harris Teeter and Food Lion stores throughout Virginia. Neither store chain offers regular paid sick days, although they did offer special COVID-19 only time off. There are Harris Teeter stores in Northern Virginia, Charlottesville, and Tidewater area. There are Food Lions all over the state.

Structure of the Actions: The actions will be planned for Saturday Nov 20. The suggested time is 10 a.m. but groups can plan another time if more convenient for their people. You can plan an action with as few as five or six people, but more people will have great impact. The actions will be short and will include the following:

- Offering testimonials about the need for paid sick days.
- Flyers distributed to consumers urging them to contact their legislators to ensure that the workers at the grocery store where they shop will receive paid sick days.
- Participants will email their legislators: vapaidsickdays.org/take-action
- Posting on social media about your action and tagging [@vapaidsickdays](https://twitter.com/vapaidsickdays)

Planning Your Action

- 1) **Commit.** Talk with your group or a few friends and decide you want to plan an action. As few as five or six people can have a good action and make a difference.
- 2) **Choose a store.** Choose which store you would like to visit. You can find the locations of the Harris Teeter and Food Lion stores by visiting their websites.
- 3) **Sign Up.** Sign up [here](#) to host an action. If you would like to join an action instead of hosting, you can see the [map of actions](#) here. Be sure to write a comment letting the action host know you'll be coming.
- 4) **Scope out the store.** You may be required to be on public land, not on the private property of the grocery store.
- 5) **Recruit participants.** Recruit some friends and family to attend.
- 6) **Recruit a few leaders.** Here are the roles you will need:
 - a. **People to share stories.** Encourage a few participants to share their stories about not having paid sick days (or the stories of family members/friends).
 - b. **Delegation leader.** If you decide to send a delegation to meet with the grocery store owner (an option but not required), recruit someone to lead the delegation.
- 7) **Print flyers for customers.** Flyers can be found in this toolkit. Both black and white and color options are enclosed.

Optional Delegation to the Manager: Consider sending a small delegation of people into the store to talk with the store manager. The meeting is to ask the Manager to convey to his or her manager that people in the community would like the store to provide paid sick days to workers and to support a paid sick day standard in Virginia. The Manager will not be able make any commitment, but the message will get through to the upper management. You can also assure the Manager that the group gathered is peaceful and will only be outside the store a few minutes. (Sometimes stores managers get nervous.)

November 20, 2021 Schedule (can be adjusted as needed)

- 9:50 a.m. Walk or drive over to the grocery store. Meet in the parking lot.
- 10:00 a.m. Distribute flyers to customers.
- 10:10 a.m. Hear the testimonies and send emails: vapaidsickdays.org/take-action
- 10:30 a.m. Take photos and depart
- Before noon Post on social media and tag [@vapaidsickdays](https://twitter.com/vapaidsickdays)

A word about the police

You may be asked to stand on public land or move if you are blocking an entrance.

A word about staffing

These actions are entirely decentralized and rely on your involvement to make them a success.

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Send your legislators an email urging them to pass a paid sick day standard that covers all workers in Virginia.

www.vapaid sick days.org/take-action

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