



Dear Refs,

After getting an update from all of our clients, we can confirm that **Ref Union will not be staffing ANY events through the end of April 2020.**

I know this news will prove stressful for a lot of you — the complete shutdown of grassroots sports has put a major strain upon a lot of referees' finances. As I said when this all started, we want to be here for you guys if you ever need help. As part of that commitment, I am proud to launch the **Ref Union Cares Initiative** to help our members make ends meet while we patiently wait to get back to work.

The Ref Union Cares Initiative will make over half of our treasury's funds available to our referees as a loan throughout this extended work stoppage. Eligible referees will be able to borrow **up to \$500, interest-free**, for as long as we are on hiatus. It will remain interest-free if you pay it back through your work at our leagues or tournaments within **6 weeks** of us being back in action.

Thereafter, the "vig," will be **\$25 per month** (or one standard game fee) for any loan amount outstanding over \$100.

There are only **two initial requirements** for this loan:

1. You have to have been with the Union for at least **three years**.
2. You have to be a steady contributor, working at least **80 games or making at least \$2,000 per year**.

Both of these requirements have some flexibility. For example: if you've been with us for only two years but are highly dependable, I'm not going to hold that extra year against you. The standards above are just to protect myself. In the same respect, however, even if you meet both requirements, no loan is guaranteed. You will also be required to sign a document promising to pay it back and submit a photocopy of your ID, just in case we have to hunt you down later.

Three other assignors have joined me in offering similar pay advances within their respective programs: **Ryan Liebengood of Top Notch Officiating, Baha Maleki of La Jolla Officials Association** and **Yogi Najera of America's Finest Officials**. They have already loaned out *thousands of dollars* to officials that needed it.

I have likewise extended an invite to over **20 other assignors, unit presidents, camp hosts, and other influencers within the referee community**, including a dozen in Southern California. Officials are always being asked to give back to the game. It's time for us to give a little back to our officials.

If you're a referee and would like to make a request for a loan, **e-mail me with what you need**, and then we'll talk over the phone next week to get you set up.

As always, stay safe, stay sane, and try to stay inside.

Cheers and well wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Chris Balasinski
Ref Union Head Representative