



COVID-19 INFORMATION ON UNEMPLOYMENT & PAID LEAVE

Washington State Unemployment

Some members have reported challenges with the automated systems while applying for UI benefits. Every one of our members is eligible for UI with the Governor's Executive Order in place.

Filing can be done Online at <https://secure.esd.wa.gov/home/> By Phone at 800-318-6022

1. When members apply for benefits, they should select "laid off" as the reason for separating from their employer. They should choose "Company temporarily closed" from the secondary option.
 - This does not apply to employees who are continuing to work and considered [essential critical infrastructure workers](#), as outlined by the governor.
 - As new information emerges, this is subject to change, we will update if this changes.
2. As full referral unions, work searches are not needed, they are being done on behalf of the membership. During the COVID epidemic, all Washingtonians are currently exempt from the requirement to be actively searching for a job, but if that allowance is revoked for others, construction union members will still be exempt from the job search requirements.
3. Members can request standby status for up to 12 weeks. It is recommended that members call-in to their Local to get on the out of work list. If an employer wants someone on standby, that's fine, but the Employment Security Department (ESD) audits our Halls regularly to see who is on the out of work list, and members not found on the list may be denied benefits.
4. The one-week waiting period to be eligible for unemployment benefits is waived.

ESD is struggling to keep up with the volume of requests on their end. They are hiring more than 100 new employees to try to meet the need. However, the computer systems that they rely on need to be updated and changed, and this will lead to problems. Please let us know if members are experiencing a problem with the automated system.

Federal CARES Act

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES) Act provides an emergency increase to regular unemployment compensation benefits to all states entering into agreements with the U.S. Secretary of Labor. Washington State will provide individuals receiving regular unemployment compensation benefits with an additional \$600 in weekly Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. This additional funding will be available until July 31, 2020 and can be granted retroactively as far back as January 27th. This additional weekly \$600 shall not be counted when determining an individual's income for any purpose under any program established under the Social Security Act and will not be taxable or able to be garnished, except in cases of child support.

The timing on the release of these funds remains uncertain. Washington State is working with the Federal government right now, and after an agreement is reached, ESD will need to again make adjustments to their systems to disburse the money. The money will come through ESD and will not require any additional application by members.

Paid Leave Under the CARES Act

Starting April 1, contractors will be required to pay workers up to 80 hours for unworked hours when employees are unable to work for any of the following reasons:

1. The employee is under a Federal, State or local isolation or quarantine order related to COVID-19.
2. The employee is self-quarantining for COVID-19 concerns on the advice of a medical professional.
3. The employee is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking testing.
4. The employee is caring for another individual who meets conditions (1) or (2).
5. The employee is caring for his or her child because the child's school has been closed, or childcare is unavailable, due to COVID-19.
6. The employee is experiencing any other similar condition specified by the Secretary of Health and Human Services. This provision allows flexibility for the Departments of Health and Human Services, Treasury, and Labor to define additional eligibility rules.

Payment is required for a maximum of 80 hours. Benefits for leave falling in categories (1), (2) and (3) are capped at a daily maximum of \$511 and \$5,110 in total. Benefits for categories (4), (5) and (6) are capped at a daily maximum of \$200 and \$2,000 in total.

A letter notifying contractors of this obligation is available for Affiliates

NOTE: Liability Waivers

Some contractors have been asking workers to sign liability waivers while on the job. This practice is illegal as it represents a unilateral change in terms and conditions of employment that was not bargained or negotiated with the bargaining representatives, we have a letter for Affiliates to deliver to any contractors that may be trying to force members to sign such waivers.