

Resources for Workers Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic

April 2020

#SupportSeattleSmallBiz
#WeGotThisSeattle



Mayor Jenny Durkan and the City of Seattle are working to help working people weather the COVID-19 pandemic. We prepared this guide to help you learn about and navigate local and state resources. For more information, please visit: <http://www.seattle.gov/mayor/covid-19>. If you have any medical or health care questions about the COVID-19 pandemic, please visit: [Public Health - Seattle & King County](#).

City of Seattle Resources

Moratorium on Residential Evictions: On March 14, Mayor Durkan signed an emergency order to implement a temporary moratorium on residential evictions, which will keep Seattle families from losing their homes as a result of impacts from the pandemic. [Click here to learn more.](#)

Utility Payment Relief: Seattle Public Utilities (SPU) and Seattle City Light (SCL) will keep utility services on during the COVID-19 Civil Emergency. This will provide immediate utility relief for customers, both residential and commercial, financially impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. Effective immediately, all SPU and SCL customers can set up deferred payment plans if their financial stability has been jeopardized by COVID-19. Utility service will stay on as their deferred payment plans are developed and implemented. Customers financially impacted by COVID 19 are urged to set up payment plans with either Seattle City Light or Seattle Public Utilities by calling 206-684-3000 or sending an email 24/7 [here](#).

Paid Sick & Safe Time Ordinance: Seattle's Paid Sick and Safe Time (PSST) Ordinance provides all employees who work in Seattle with paid sick and safe time. This includes full-time, part-time, temporary, exempt, and non-exempt employees. Employees can use accrued paid sick leave if family member's school or place of care is closed. Please call the Seattle Office of Labor Standards at (206) 256-5297 or visit the [Office of Labor Standards PSST website here](#).

Food Assistance: The City of Seattle is providing \$5 million in grocery vouchers to help families impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The new grocery voucher program will provide 6,250 families \$800 in vouchers to purchase food, cleaning supplies, and other household goods at any Safeway store in Washington State. The funds are being distributed to 6,250 eligible families who are currently enrolled in City-supported child care programs and food assistance programs. To learn more, [click here](#).

State of Washington Resources

The Washington State Employment Security Department has adopted a series of emergency rules to relieve the burden of temporary layoffs, isolation and quarantine for businesses; you can learn more about them [here](#). [Click here](#) to view a side-by-side comparison of possible COVID-19 scenarios and State of Washington benefits available for workers.

Unemployment benefits: Unemployment benefits were expanded with the Congressional CARES Act. For more information, visit:

- Washington's Employment Security Department (ESD)'s [COVID-19 page](#).
- ESD's [Technical Support](#) page
- ESD's [Webinar on Unemployment Insurance](#)

Paid Sick Leave: Employers in Washington State are required to provide paid sick leave to their hourly non-exempt employees. An employee can use accrued paid sick leave if their place of business is shut down by a public official due to a health-related reason. Employees can use accrued paid sick leave if their child's school or place of care is closed for a health-related reason. To learn more, [click here](#) or view the [COVID-19 Q&A here](#).

Paid Family & Medical Leave: The State of Washington's Paid Family and Medical Leave program can provide paid leave benefits for Washington workers who need to take time off from work due to a serious health condition or to care for a family member with a serious health condition. Certification by a health care provider is required for applications for Paid Family and Medical Leave due to a serious health condition. Visit: <https://paidleave.wa.gov>.

State Unemployment Benefits: If you are laid off work temporarily, if your hours are reduced due to a business slowdown or a lack of demand due to COVID-19, or if you are not receiving payment from your employer such as paid sick leave or paid time off, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits and may qualify for standby during this time. Eligibility decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. Basic eligibility requirements for a claim can be found [here](#).

Rapid Response Layoff Resources: If COVID-19 disrupts a Washington business and causes a mass layoff or closure, ESD and its local workforce development board partners can respond with Rapid Response services and funding to help impacted workers get connected to unemployment benefits and re-employment services, including re-training, worker support services, and referrals to other social services. Visit <https://www.esd.wa.gov/newsroom/layoffassistance>.

Workers' Compensation Coverage: The Washington Department of Labor & Industries (L&I) announced that the state is taking steps to ensure workers' compensation protections for health care workers and first responders who are on the front lines of the COVID-19 outbreak. L&I is immediately changing its policy around workers' compensation coverage for health care workers and first responders who are quarantined by a physician or public health officer. Under the clarified policy, L&I will provide benefits to these workers during the time they're quarantined after being exposed to COVID-19 on the job. [Click here to learn more](#).

Washington Connection: Washington Connection offers a fast and easy way for families and individuals to apply for a variety of services such as food, cash, childcare, long-term care, and Medicare Savings Programs. Visit <https://www.washingtonconnection.org/home/> for more information.

Insurance Issues: The Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner has resources and information available for consumers who have insurance-related questions. Learn more at <https://www.insurance.wa.gov/coronavirus>.

Financial Resources: The Washington State Department of Financial Institutions has developed a list of financial resources for Washington consumers impacted by COVID-19. View it here <https://dfi.wa.gov/coronavirus-financial-resources>.

Federal Resources

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (or "CARES") Act was passed by Congress and signed by the President on Friday, March 27. This legislation provides businesses and individuals with new forms of relief during this period of economic hardship. Highlights and key provisions of the new law's benefits for workers include:

- Cash payments to individuals. For more information, visit this [IRS page](#).
- Expanded unemployment benefits. For more information see this [Washington ESD site](#).
- 2019 tax filing deadline extension. You can find more information [here](#).

Please note that some details and regulations are still being worked out. We will keep you updated on our [website](#) and on the [Bottomline Blog](#) as this situation evolves.

Philanthropic and Private Resources

The Plate Fund: Howard Schultz launched this initiative to provide immediate financial assistance to those who work in the restaurant industry. This fund provides \$500 emergency relief grants to individuals who live and work in King County who have lost their jobs in the restaurant industry or are experiencing significantly reduced hours of work due to the COVID-19 crisis. For more information find them on Twitter at [#theplatefund](#) or visit their [website](#) and apply.

The Seattle Sounders FC Relief Fund ("Fund"): This fund was established by RAVE Foundation to support individuals, small businesses, and nonprofits located in CenturyLink Field and in the neighborhoods surrounding CenturyLink Field that have been adversely impacted by the postponement of the 2020 MLS season due to COVID-19. To find out more and apply for benefits, see their [website](#).

###