

Lost work, sick or unemployed because of Coronavirus?

Hundreds of thousands of Washingtonians have lost work, are sick or unemployed because of the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. There is help available for you and your family in this crisis. Review this [Benefits Graphic](#) to see what state programs might be available to you.

Do I qualify for unemployment benefits?

Qualifying is much easier now with state and federal changes since the outbreak of the virus. More benefits are available to many more people, including people who work part-time, are self-employed or independent contractors or who have seen reduced hours or are sick. Find out if you are eligible by [checking this list](#).

How much money could I receive?

It varies, and you won't find out for sure until you apply. The federal government CARES Act includes an extra \$600 per week for everyone who qualifies for benefits (except those in a training program).

When will I receive help?

Demand for unemployment is higher than it's ever been, and the team at the Washington Employment Security Department is working hard to speed up the processing time for you. Here's the most important news: you will receive all payments you are owed, going back to the date when you became eligible. That means if you were unable to apply because you couldn't get in touch with the department, you'll get back payments.

? **What if I stopped working to care for a family member who has COVID-19 or my kids are out of school and don't have childcare?**

Due to the expanded benefits available during the COVID-19 outbreak, many situations will qualify you for benefits. Examples include:

- You have to stay home to care for your children because their schools are closed.
- Your employer shut down, and you can't work from home.
- You can't get to your workplace because of the "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order and teleworking isn't an option.
- Your hours have been reduced at work due to the impacts of COVID-19.
- You are a part-time worker who usually doesn't qualify for unemployment.
- You are self-employed or an independent contractor.

? **I work for myself and didn't qualify in the past. What do I do now?**

Self-employed workers, such as independent contractors, qualify if the virus keeps you from working.

Before applying, [download this checklist](#), which will help you with the application process and avoid making common mistakes that will slow down your application.

? **I used my unemployment benefits during the last year. Do I still qualify?**

Yes, you can qualify again or be eligible for an extension of 13 weeks on your previous claim if you are still within the benefit year.

? **I'm an undocumented worker. Do I qualify for help?**

You must have authorization to work in the U.S. to be eligible for unemployment benefits and expanded unemployment benefits. However, immigration status isn't taken into account for eligibility into the state's Paid Family and Medical Leave program. So, if you are seriously ill or caring for someone who is seriously ill, this program may be able to help. Learn more at paidleave.wa.gov or tometiempo.org.

The state has also set up a website (coronavirus.wa.gov) for coronavirus outbreak with resources, assistance and help during this crisis. [These FAQs](#) may also be helpful.

How do I apply for unemployment insurance?

There are two ways to apply: online or by phone. The website (esd.wa.gov) is the fastest way to apply and get benefits using a desktop or laptop computer. You can also use a mobile device, but it is a little harder to navigate. To apply by phone call 800-318-6022.

Before you apply, [download this application checklist](#).

Call volumes are very high right now, so you may have a hard time getting through during normal business hours. You will have better luck applying by phone if you call after 6 p.m. and before 7 a.m. If you are delayed in applying, know that you will receive all payments you are owed, going back to the date when you became eligible.

For general questions, call 833-572-8400

What does the application process involve?

The process can be confusing, so it's important to review the information on the website and use the checklists and videos to help you get ready, it will be much easier. There are several steps you need to follow, and if you aren't usually eligible for unemployment, because you work part-time, are self-employed or can't work due to your kids' school closure, you will need to first apply for regular unemployment first and be denied before applying for expanded unemployment benefits (called pandemic unemployment assistance, or PUA).

How do I keep up with all the changes happening?

Our website is being updated as new information becomes available. You also can sign-up for email alerts in English on the website [here](#).

[Learn more at esd.wa.gov](https://esd.wa.gov)