

Unemployment Explainer

Employment Security Department (ESD) is the state agency responsible for administering Washington's Unemployment Insurance and Paid Family Medical Leave programs.

[For workers and businesses affected by COVID-19 \(coronavirus\)](#) - This ESD page breaks down what the new rules addressing the COVID-19 crisis are.

Standby - Select standby if you expect to return to work in the next 12 weeks. Allows you to remain an employee while not working and still receive unemployment.

SharedWork - Makes applicants eligible for a higher weekly benefit amount if continuing to work paid hours and enrolled in the program (NOT FULL WAGES). Lots of specific details, most amount of benefit if still working. Shared work program will take longer to set up but doesn't prevent individuals from applying for unemployment before it is. - [Shared Work Program eligibility](#)

Unemployment Details:

- In Washington state, the maximum weekly benefit amount is \$790. The minimum is \$188. No one who is eligible for benefits will receive less than this, regardless of their earnings.
- Unemployment can start immediately upon losing work, no one week waiting period
- Most employees qualify for most forms of unemployment at this time, as long as they have worked 680 hours in your base year. (ESD HAS SAID THIS MAY GO AWAY) You can look up your reported wages for last year when you create a secure access wa individual login and then an esd eservices login
- **REMEMBER:** You must file a claim **EVERY** week in order to receive unemployment benefits. Paid time off/Sick time counts towards your gross wages.
- [Calculate Your Base Year & Estimated Unemployment Benefits](#)

NOTE TO EVERYONE: There are a lot of auto letters being sent out. They are not all correct. If you have been denied standby they will automatically review it again and send a new notice and they are asking you don't call the claim center. Also, as a result of the emergency unemployment claims have skyrocketed, it is likely that processing and payments will be slower than usual, plan accordingly.

The Relief Bill may:

- Increase unemployment by \$600 for up to 4 months.
- Self-employed and contract workers would be eligible for benefits for up to 39 weeks.

Further Resources:

[Handbook for unemployed workers](#) - Full info booklet for the ESD's unemployment programs.

[Unemployment benefits application checklist](#) - Simple check-list for qualifying and applying for unemployment.

[Temporary layoffs and furloughs](#) - Includes information about Standby.

[SharedWork](#) - Information about the SharedWork program, it may take the state additional time to process SharedWork claims as opposed to regular unemployment and the employer will need to authorize it.

[COVID-19 Scenarios & Benefits Available](#) - Handy benefit chart.

COVID-19 Scenarios & Benefits Available

The information shared on this flyer does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any other agency or company. It is the reader's responsibility to verify the facts of coverage.

COVID-19 SCENARIOS	Paid Sick Leave (employer paid)	Unemployment Insurance		Paid Family & Medical Leave	Industrial Insurance (L&I)
	Current Law	Current Law	Emergency Rule	Current Law	Current Law
1 Worker is mildly ill with COVID-19.	✓	✗	✓	?	?
2 Worker is severely ill with COVID-19.	✓	✗	✗	✓	?
3 Worker was exposed and quarantined. Business remains open.	✓	✗	✓	✗	?
4 Worker is caring for sick family member.	✓	✗	?	✓	✗
5 Schools are closed by a public official because of COVID-19 and worker has no childcare.	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
6 Worker is immune-compromised and advised to self-quarantine.	?	✗	✓	?	✗
7 Worker is afraid of gathering in a group and refuses to go to work (self-distancing).	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
8 Employer must shut down due to a quarantine by a public official.	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
9 Employer shuts down due to a business slowdown or lack of demand.	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
10 Employer reduces available hours due to business slowdown or lack of demand.	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗
11 Employer stays open in defiance of public health urging to close.	✗	?	?	✗	✗
12 Health care workers and first responder are under quarantine.	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓



The Employment Security Department is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Language assistance services for limited English proficient individuals are available free of charge. Washington Relay Service: 711

