

Financial resources available in Pierce County to address the impact of the coronavirus.

Free Xfinity Wifi

Comcast is offering its Internet Essentials program free to new customers for 60 days. All new customers will receive a free self-install kit that includes a cable modem and WiFi router. There is no term contract. To sign up, applicants can visit the [Internet Essentials website](#), which includes the option to video chat with customer service agents in American Sign Language. Or call 1-855-846-8376 for English and 1-855-765-6995 for Spanish.

Pierce County Energy Assistance Program

The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) pays heating bills directly to utility companies for eligible applicants. Payments are based on eligible household's fuel usage for the past 12 months and income. For energy assistance, call the automated line at 253-798-4328 to schedule an appointment. During this appointment, a customer service agent will help you fill out the application. Completed applications, including required paperwork, must be delivered to our Soundview office located at 3602 Pacific Ave. Suite 200 in Tacoma.

Rental Assistance may be available on a limited basis. Qualifying residents are eligible for assistance once per year, up to \$1,000. Please call 253-798-8700 to check the current status of rental assistance.

Puget Sound Energy Assistance During Covid-19

PSE will not be disconnecting customers for non-payment during this time.

PSE will be scaling back re-light services for our natural gas customers. Please be prepared to contact a local contractor if this service is needed.

PSE received approval from the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission for a waiver that allows PSE to **waive late fees**.

PSE will work with our customers on options such as **payment plans** and **choosing a new bill due date**.

PSE has an **energy assistance portal** to facilitate access to funds available to income qualified customers.

The following information is from Employment Security website at <https://esd.wa.gov/newsroom/covid-19>.

If you are affected by COVID-19, Employment Security has programs that may be able to help. We adopted a series of emergency rules to relieve the burden of temporary layoffs, isolation and quarantine for workers and businesses. The following provides answers to many of the frequently asked questions we are receiving about qualifying for unemployment benefits. 1-800-318-6022.

WA State Employment Security Q & A

What if I need to take time off work because I contract COVID-19?

The first and best option for employees who need to miss work due to illness is to use their employer-paid time off. Labor and Industries has [information about Paid Sick Leave](#). When this leave is not available, [Paid Family & Medical Leave](#) may be available to help.

What if I am asked by a medical professional or public health official to quarantine as a result of COVID-19, but I am not sick?

If you are following guidance issued by a medical professional or public health official to isolate or quarantine yourself as a result of exposure to COVID-19 and you are not receiving paid sick leave from your employer, you may be eligible to receive unemployment benefits. Eligibility decisions are made on a case-by-case basis. If you know you can return to your job as soon as your isolation or quarantine is lifted, you may not need to search for work. You must be able to accept any work offered by your employer that would not cause you to break isolation or quarantine.

What should I do if I contract COVID-19 on the job?

See information from the Dept. of Labor and Industries [information on Workers' Compensation](#).

Do I qualify for unemployment benefits if I become seriously ill and I am forced to quit my job as a result of COVID-19?

If you are too ill to be able and available for work, you do not qualify for unemployment benefits. However, you may qualify for Paid Family & Medical Leave while you are sick. You can learn more in this [Q&A](#). Once you recover and are available for work again, you can apply for unemployment benefits.

My employer has shut down operations temporarily because an employee is sick and we have been asked to isolate or quarantine as a result of COVID-19. Am I eligible for unemployment benefits?

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](#).

What if I am temporarily laid off work because business has slowed down as a result of COVID-19?

If you are laid off work temporarily or if your hours are reduced due to a business slowdown or a lack of demand as a result of COVID-19, you may be able to receive

unemployment benefits. Eligibility decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

- **Standby** means you do not have to look for another job while you collect unemployment benefits, so long as you stay in contact with your regular employer. You must accept any work you can do without breaking isolation or quarantine that is offered by your employer, such as telework. **When you file your claim, you can request up to four weeks of standby.** If needed, your employer can request up to an additional four weeks of standby (for a total of eight) as long as you will be returning to work full-time when business picks up again.
- **Partial Employment or SharedWork:** Under certain circumstances, you may work part-time while collecting unemployment benefits.

What if my employer goes out of business as a result of COVID-19?

You may be eligible for unemployment benefits if you're out of work due to a lack of work. Here are instructions on [how to apply for unemployment benefits](#). (These benefits are intended to assist workers who lost their jobs through no fault of their own.)

I am a part-time employee. Am I eligible for standby?

If you have an anticipated date that you will return to work, under the emergency rules we put into place as a result of COVID-19, standby is available to all full-time, part-time, and other less than full-time employees. If you worked part time in the last 18 months, you must meet the minimum requirement of having worked 680 hours in your base year in order to have an unemployment claim. Basic eligibility requirements for a claim can be found [here](#).

What programs are offered to assist businesses to keep workers during COVID-19?

We have expanded programs to help support businesses and workers whose financial stability is affected by COVID-19.

- **SharedWork:** This program allows employers to reduce the hours of permanent and hourly-paid employees by as much as 50 percent, and the employees can collect partial unemployment benefits to replace a portion of their lost wages. While on the SharedWork program, employees are not required to make an active search for work. You must apply to participate in the program. The application and instructions can be found [here](#).
- **Partial employment** (for reduction in hours): If you are temporarily reducing hours of work for your full-time employees, they may be able to receive unemployment benefits without needing to look for work.

- **Standby:** In certain circumstances, your employees may be eligible for standby. Standby means they do not have to look for other work but need to be available for any work you offer that they can do if quarantined or isolated. Generally, standby is only allowed for up to eight weeks during a claim year. We may grant an extension of standby for more than eight weeks if you make your request in writing and can show extraordinary circumstances. Under the new emergency rules, temporary shutdowns related to COVID-19 infection at the place of business that cause you to close or severely reduce operations are considered extraordinary circumstances.

If I need to temporarily shut down my business due to a possible COVID-19 contamination or quarantine at the worksite, can I receive a relief of benefit charges?

If you are a taxable employer, you may request a relief of benefit charges due to a business closure which is directly related to possible contamination at the business site. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

What if I need to temporarily lay off employees due to a slowdown of business which is not directly linked to COVID-19?

You may request to [place an employee on standby](#) for up to eight weeks and your employee can collect unemployment benefits without having to look for other work. While on standby, workers must accept any work you offer that they can do without breaking isolation or quarantine. Relief of benefit charges cannot be granted in this situation.

What if I am late in filing tax reports, paying taxes, or responding timely to requests for information as a result of COVID-19?

Financial penalties may be waived if the delays are a result of COVID-19 impacts.

What will happen to my employees if I go out of business due to impacts from COVID-19?

If you lay off employees due to a permanent closure, they can apply for unemployment benefits. Eligibility will be determined based upon criteria in place prior to COVID-19, and on a case-by-case basis. Layoff assistance may be available for businesses facing major layoffs. [Learn more](#).

Where can I find additional resources for businesses?

- [Resource list for businesses](#) from the Governor's Office.
- [Workplace information](#) from the state Department of Health.

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



ESD.WA.GOV

UPDATED: 03.12.20 - 1:00 p.m.

The Small Business Administration (SBA) has disaster relief loans for businesses (large and small) and nonprofits impacted by Covid-19. For additional information, please go to <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/Declarations/Index>.

EBT Online Purchase – Amazon and Walmart have been added to the approved vendors list for online purchase using EBT cards through the SNAP program effective March 1st, 2020.