

**INDIVIDUAL HOME PAGE**

**GOVERNOR REYNOLDS ANNOUNCES ASSISTANCE FOR EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS AFFECTED BY COVID-19 RELATED LAYOFFS**

DES MOINES – Governor Reynolds today announced assistance for workers and employers impacted by layoffs related to COVID-19.  The guidance includes information for employees filing for unemployment insurance claims, as well as information on programs available for employers.

“Iowa has incredible employers accommodating the needs of Iowans during the disruption caused by COVID-19,” said Gov. Reynolds. “The state of Iowa is doing everything we can to ease the process and shorten the time it will take for Iowans to receive unemployment benefits. All of our state agencies continue to work as one team to lessen the impact COVID-19 will have on our economy and our people.”

“Iowa Workforce Development is taking steps to reduce the impact of these claims on employers who have had to temporarily lay off staff due to closures or slowdowns,” said IWD Director Beth Townsend. “IWD encourages all employers to utilize paid leave and telework options for employees before utilizing temporary layoffs.  Iowa Workforce Development will continue to monitor the situation, working with our stakeholders and updates will be released on our webpage.”

**Unemployment insurance claims:**

* If you are laid off due to COVID-19 or have to stay home to self-isolate, care for family members or due to illness related to COVID-19, you can receive unemployment benefits, provided you meet all other eligibility requirements. Work search requirements will be waived. More specific explanation of benefit eligibility can be found at:[https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/2019-unemployment-insurance-claimant-handbook](https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/2019-unemployment-insurance-claimant-handbook?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)
* Claimants can expect to receive payment within 7-10 days after the date the claim is filed.
* Claims that are filed and identified as a direct or indirect result of COVID-19, will not be charged to employers.  Fact-finding interviews for these claims will be waived and not be held although employers will be notified of claims received.
* IWD will process unemployment insurance payments to ensure payment will continue to be paid in a timely manner.

“The Iowa Workforce Development team is dedicated to providing assistance to employees and employers affected by COVID-19.  Please do not hesitate to contact myself or our team for assistance at 1-866-239-0843,” said Director Townsend.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT COVID-19 AND IOWA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

[IWD COVID-19 page](https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/updates-and-resources-about-covid-19) is updated as new information becomes available.

Due to a higher volume of calls on our unemployment insurance customer service line, wait times may be longer than usual. **Before you call, please visit the COVID-19 page and review the**[**FAQs for employers and claimants here**](https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/updates-and-resources-about-covid-19)**, or**[**watch the Unemployment Insurance Q & A Video.**](https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/unemployment-insurance-during-covid-19-questions-and-answers-claimants) Thank you for your patience.

**GOV. REYNOLDS ANNOUNCES UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE TAX EXTENSION TO ASSIST SMALL BUSINESSES**

March 23, 2020

DES MOINES - Today, Governor Reynolds announced that first quarter unemployment tax payments that are due April 30th will be delayed till the end of the 2nd quarter, July 31, 2020.  Eligible employers include those employers with 50 or fewer employees. Eligible employers also must be in good standing with no delinquencies in quarterly payments.

“Iowa’s small businesses are the lifeblood of our communities and the engine behind our economy. Now more than ever we need to make sure they have the ability to manage their cash flow,” said Gov. Reynolds. “It’s critically important that we continue to take steps in support of our small business community during these challenging times.”

To qualify for the extension, the employer must be current on all quarterly tax payments before the 1st quarter of 2020 regardless of whether or not they are seeking an extension of tax payment. All employers must file Quarterly Employers Contribution and Payroll Report electronically by 4:30 on April 24th to avoid late report filing penalty.

Payments for Q1 would be due when Q2 payments are due, July 31, 2020. No interest or penalties will accrue for delayed payments for the eligible group.  The extension of payment deadline without interest is not a holiday or forgiveness and the taxes will be due July 31, 2020. Employers still need to file their quarterly reports, which contain employee wage data necessary to compute benefit eligibility and amounts to be paid.

“More than 95% of businesses in Iowa, or 72,264 employers, have 50 or fewer employees.  They employ a total of 417,536 Iowans, pay approximately $4.2 billion in wages.  Providing an extension to paying unemployment insurance taxes will help the vast majority of employers during this difficult time,” said Director Beth Townsend, Iowa Workforce Development.

For an employer who elects to take advantage of the extension, please contact our Unemployment Insurance Tax division at either 1-888-848-7442 or by sending an email to Q1tax@iwd.iowa.gov.   If an employer would like to request additional time to pay the tax, please contact the Unemployment Insurance Tax Division. IWD recommends sending an email versus a phone call as there is a high call volume during this time that may lead to extended wait times.  Employers must notify IWD of intent to delay payment by Friday, April 24th at 4:30 pm.

<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/>

**PAID LEAVE AND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS**

Employees are required to use all available paid leave prior to filing for unemployment insurance benefits, which includes vacation, sick leave (if available) or Paid Time Off (PTO). This is true for part time employees who also accrue paid leave. This is necessary for several reasons, primarily to preserve the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund for the duration, including:

• Employees receive more pay from paid benefits than they are entitled to under unemployment insurance (claimant with four dependents and minimum benefit is $87/week for a claimant with no dependents).

• Requiring the exhaustion of available paid leave will decrease the number of claimants filing claims now.

• Employers are not being charged for any COVID-19 related claims being made by their employees.

• It is unclear at this time when or how much federal reimbursement we will receive for COVID-19 claims, so we need to ensure our trust fund lasts as long as possible.

• Employers’ rules regarding access to sick leave will determine whether sick leave will be exhausted before filing for unemployment insurance. For employers requiring actual illness of self or dependent and an individual is not sick but laid off, that leave is not viewed as accessible and would not need to be exhausted.

• Employers that utilize PTO that does not distinguish between vacation and sick leave, would require employees to exhaust PTO before an employee is eligible for unemployment.

• If an employer lacks the financial resources to pay leave out as it is used, the employee will be deemed as having exhausted their leave and will be eligible for unemployment benefits.

• If your employer uses paid time off to pay employee’s share of health insurance costs during a layoff, an employee will not have to exhaust paid time off first. We do not intend for employees to have to choose between unemployment benefits and health insurance, nor do we want anyone to lose access to their health insurance.

• If it is determined later that all paid leave was not exhausted prior to receiving unemployment benefits, we will work with employees on repayment and we can waive any penalty or interest that might accrue as a result of the overpayment (non-fraud situation).

• We are trying to protect our current employer Table 7 tax rate (average 1.24%) which is determined in large part by UI Trust Fund balance. Readings of the fund balance are made on June 30th and August 15th each year, and the date with the larger balance is used.

• A move from Table 7 to table 6 (1.57% average rate) would result in an increase to all employers’ UI tax rate by 26.2% and a move to Table 5 (1.95% average rate) would be an increase of 57.3%.

• Employers may apply for the Voluntary Shared Work Program which permits employers to seek an alternative to layoffs — retaining their trained employees by reducing their hours and wages that can be partially offset with unemployment insurance benefits. Employees who remain employed, even part time, under this program, would not be required to exhaust paid time off before qualifying for unemployment benefits.

Updated March 25, 2020

<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/sites/search.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/files/content-files/PTO%20and%20unemployment%20benefit%20talking%20points%20-%203-25-3030.pdf>

**UPDATES AND RESOURCES ABOUT COVID-19**

 A status report of monitoring and testing of COVID-19 in Iowa provided by Iowa Department of Public Health can be found on the main [IDPH Novel Coronavirus website.](https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery%C2%A0)

 In addition, a public hotline has been established for Iowans with questions about COVID-19. The line is available 24/7 by calling 2-1-1.

Questions can be submitted at our COVID-19 email address.

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES IN IOWA**

[**Employers - COVID-19 and Unemployment Insurance Questions**](https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/sites/search.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/files/content-files/Employer%20COVID-19%20QA%203-25-2020.pdf)

[**Employers - Voluntary Shared Work Program**](https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/sites/search.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/files/content-files/3-25-2020%20update%20VSW%20Flyer%20-%20COVID-19.pdf)

[**Workers - COVID-19 and Unemployment Insurance Questions**](https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/sites/search.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/files/content-files/UI%20Worker_COVID-19%20QA%203-25-2020.pdf)

[**Employers and Workers - Paid Leave and Unemployment Benefits**](https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/sites/search.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/files/content-files/PTO%20and%20unemployment%20benefit%20talking%20points%20-%203-25-3030.pdf)

**FILE FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS**

You can file for unemployment insurance benefits here:

<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/file-claim-unemployment-insurance-benefits>

Need help filing online? Watch this video <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/how-file-unemployment-insurance-online>:

**¿Necesita ayuda para presentar en línea? Vea este video:** <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/c%C3%B3mo-presentar-su-reclamo-de-seguro-de-desempleo-en-l%C3%ADnea>

If you have questions about your claim, please call**1-866-239-0843,**or email **uiclaimshelp@iwd.iowa.gov**

Unemployment Insurance Claimant Handbook (English) - <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/2019-unemployment-insurance-claimant-handbook>

Unemployment Insurance Claimant Handbook (Español.) - <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/es/2019-manual-del-reclamante-del-seguro-de-desempleo>

IowaWORKS Centers are taking significant steps to follow the Iowa Department of Public Health's guidance for social distancing. Effective immediately, IowaWORKS offices will only be open to customers with an appointment, or to accept identity verification from customers applying for benefits. We encourage you to call or email us to receive assistance in the safety of your own home: uiclaimshelp@iwd.iowa.gov, or 866-239-0843. Iowa Workforce Development will provide updates related to the impact of COVID-19 as they become available. Please review [**this page for the latest information and resources**](https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/updates-and-resources-about-covid-19).

<https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/COVID-19>