

April 29, 2020 – Weekly Wednesday OED Webinar

Kirstin Wysen, Policy Analyst (Public Health Update)

Updates:

- Washington State's use of a science-based response has benefited us as a state. We are 3 weeks past the peak in deaths. There is a positive downward trend projected for the month of May.
- King County – Currently, 5,945 confirmed cases and 646 deaths.
- Covid-19 will be in our environment for months or years.
- References Inslee's recovery plan that is gradual, data-driven, and health-focused.
 - More testing
 - Contact tracing
 - PPE for everyone who needs it
 - Adequate capacity in our health care system
 - A vaccine.
- Preventing another outbreak is our priority:
 - Prohibit large gatherings
 - Teleworking
 - Physical distance
 - Some industries will open faster than others
 - If another outbreak occurs, restrictions could go back into place.
- Getting back to work
 - Implement a phased-in approach
 - Maintain smart physical distancing and other public health requirements
 - Implement requirements for employers and workers.

Resources

- [Kingcounty.gov/covid](https://kingcounty.gov/covid) has public health posters and information available in 30 languages.

Audience Question: What number of people is considered a large gathering?

50 people or more in King County is considered a large gathering.

AJ Cari – Small Business Advocate working on SBA – OED

Updates:

- OED is offering technical assistance with PPP applications. The EIDL program is not yet open.
 - OED will explain the resources to small businesses, non-profits, and sole proprietors.
 - Recently added language capacity and we are providing resources to underserved businesses having issues and access to capital.
 - Convened and trained a team of 20.
 - Currently have the capacity to provide in-language support in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Amharic, and Korean and more.

- PPP
 - Currently taking applications. There is no cost to apply.
 - Forgivable loan if you use this money for payroll for employees
 - Loan amount up to 2.5 times average monthly payroll costs, up to \$10M.
 - Payroll costs include salary, wages, commission, and tips capped at \$100K annually, plus benefits, leave, and state/local taxes.
 - Loans can be forgiven if: At least 75% of the loan proceeds are used to cover payroll costs over an 8-week period once funds are received.
 - Up to 25% of the funds can be used for non-payroll costs including mortgage interest, rent, and utilities.
 - Loans can be forgiven if: Rehire to pre-COVID-19 staffing levels prior to June 30 (high former laid-off employees)
 - Key application info needed: Different intake process from bank to bank.

Resources:

- Visit OED's [SBA Assistance website](#)
- Call OED at OED@seattle.gov or call 206-684-8090. Language assistance is available.

Audience Questions

- **Can we apply at multiple banks then cancel?**
 - Yes, you can. If you feel like your application is moving forward, stay with them. If it is not moving forward, doesn't hurt to check with other banks.
- **Is insurance a forgivable expense?**
 - If insurance premiums associated with payroll, then yes.
- **Will the PPP loan look at dollars or percentage of employees?**
 - They will look at dollars.
- **If we can't staff up quickly, can we give bonuses to existing employees, does that count?**
 - If the bonus shows up in the W-2, then that would work.

Nancy Yamamoto – Work Force Development Director – OED

High-level overview of the New Unemployment Benefits Under the CARES Act.

- **Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance**
- Additional \$600 a week.
- Benefits can be backdated from mid-April to July 25.
- **Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation**
- Additional 13 weeks of compensation
- Eligible to anyone whose exhausted a regular unemployment claim since July 1, 2019.
- Apply when the regular claim is exhausted or close to exhausting your regular claim.
- **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance**
- Fill in gaps of what is typically available to employees.
- Provides up to 39 weeks of benefits

Resources:

- www.edsa.gov
- Virtual Chat: www.worksourcewa.com
- Recording of April 24 Webinar with Scott Michael, ESD Legal Services Coordination.

Audience Questions: Where do I apply if I am self-employed?

- Checklist is available on ESD website. ESD takes the average of two of the highest quarters.

Overall Weekly Updates:

- Mayor's Emergency Order restricting delivery commission fees on April 24 to impose 15% commission cap to third-party delivery services. Effective immediately. These were unregulated before. 100% of tips go directly to drivers. Make it illegal to reduce compensation rates passing to driver. This will be in effect for the duration of the stay at home order. Misdemeanor. Call non-emergency line to report 206-625-5011
- CB 119766: Legislation restricting increases in rents for small businesses.

Darius Foster from Office of Labor Standard: Paid Sick and Safe Time

Purpose of Office of Labor Standards is to oversee Seattle's labor standard laws

- **Contact: 206-256-5297**
- Business.laborstandards@seattle.gov
- Seattle.gov/laborstandards

Our services:

- Outreach and education.
- Answer worker/employer questions about labor laws
- Investigate/resolve violations of law

Updates:**Amendment to Paid sick and Safe Time (PSST) Ordinance to include Covid-related caretaking benefits.****Resources:**

Templates, FAQs, rules of ordinances. Check out the [Office of Labor Standards website](#).

Audience Questions:

- **Can an employer ask for details about, or the reason, an employee asked to use PSST? No.** Employees are not required to share the reason for using PSST. Employers may ask for verification that the use of PSST was for an authorized use after more than three consecutive workdays of PSST. Employers may not ask about the nature of the use. Please see our comprehensive Q&A for more information.

- **When can an employer ask for verification of the employee's use of PSST?** After an absence of three days, an employer can require documentation that continued use of PSST is necessary. The employee cannot be required to explain the nature of the use, only that the use was authorized. Employers do not have to request verification and we encourage employers to be as flexible as possible during this time.
- **Can an employee use PSST if their family member's school or place of care is closed?** Yes. An employee may use PSST if their family member's school or place of care has been closed. Prior to the March 2020 amendments, employees could use PSST when their child's place of care or school was closed due to the order of a public health official for a health-related reason. Now an employee may use PSST if any family member's place of care or school is closed. Also, the law no longer requires that the closure be for a health-related reason or that a public official order the closure.