



Small Business COVID-19 resources

Updated 3/16/2020

We at the Office of Economic Development are hearing the widespread impact of COVID-19 on our small businesses and are taking immediate steps to mitigate financial stress. We recognize COVID-19 presents many immediate and long-term challenges and uncertainties for public health and economic stability. The City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development is committed to responding to and supporting our small businesses to mitigate the economic impact of COVID-19.

In a series of press releases within the past week Mayor Jenny Durkan announced several initiatives to help support small businesses, working people, and vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 outbreak, including:

1. Deferral of B&O taxes
2. Expansion of Small Business Stabilization Fund
3. Assistance to access SBA loans
4. Relief for Utility Payments
5. New Small Business Recovery Task Force
6. Temporary moratorium halting residential evictions

As these efforts begin to roll out, we continue to work to determine effective, immediate ways to help our small business community. Here's what we know:

1. Deferral of B&O taxes:

Eligible businesses include those that have annual taxable income of \$5 million or less and currently pay City taxes on a quarterly basis. Businesses will have until late 2020 to pay their B&O under this plan. The City estimates that 20,000 businesses could be eligible for this, based on B&O reporting. You can request deferral by sending an email to tax@seattle.gov with your request and customer number or UBI. For more information, contact Finance and Administrative Services at 206-684-8484

2. Expansion of Small Business Stabilization Fund:

City of Seattle will commit approximately \$1.5 million in one-time Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds to the Small Business Stabilization Fund, an emergency fund that provides working capital grants in amounts up to \$10,000 to qualifying small businesses. [Read Mayor Durkan's 3/12 press release about the Executive Order to help small businesses.](#) Applications are accepted through 11:59PM Wednesday, March 25th.

CDBG funds are tied to requirements from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) that must be met for the City of Seattle to access these funds. Allocation of these funds must address the housing, homeless, community development and economic development needs of the City's low and moderate-income residents and neighborhoods.



Eligibility criteria for the Stabilization Fund are:

- **The business owner must have a low- or moderate-income (≤80% of the Area Median Income).**

Income Limits						
Family Size	Percent of Area Median Income					HUD 80%
	30%	40%	50%	60%	65%	
1 Person	\$23,250	\$31,000	\$38,750	\$46,500	\$50,350	\$61,800
2 Persons	\$26,550	\$35,400	\$44,300	\$53,150	\$57,550	\$70,600
3 Persons	\$29,900	\$39,850	\$49,800	\$59,800	\$64,750	\$79,450
4 Persons	\$33,200	\$44,300	\$55,350	\$66,400	\$71,950	\$88,250
5 Persons	\$35,850	\$47,800	\$59,800	\$71,750	\$77,700	\$95,350
6 Persons	\$38,500	\$51,350	\$64,200	\$77,050	\$83,450	\$102,400
7 Persons	\$41,200	\$54,900	\$68,650	\$82,350	\$89,200	\$109,450
8 Persons	\$43,850	\$58,450	\$73,050	\$87,650	\$95,000	\$116,500

- **The business must have five employees or less.**
 - The CDBG definition is a business that has five (5) or fewer employees, including the owner(s). All employees, part time and full time, on the business payroll at the time of loan application will be counted. The term “employee” includes all owners of the business on the payroll, even if the owner’s “salary draws” are not on a regular basis.
- **The business must have a physical establishment.**
 - Eligible applicants must have a physical business address within the City of Seattle. You can check for eligibility here: <https://www.seattle.gov/council/meet-the-council/find-your-district-and-councilmembers>
 - An ineligible existing business applicant is one that has a physical business location outside of the City of Seattle. Nonprofits are not an eligible microenterprise business.
- **The business must have experienced a loss of income due to COVID-19.**
 - Federal regulations require that the business provide proof of loss of revenue due to a destabilizing event, typically through a profit loss statement.

Learn more and apply: <http://www.seattle.gov/office-of-economic-development/small-business/small-business-programs/stabilization-fund>

Frequently Asked Questions: <https://www.seattle.gov/office-of-economic-development/small-business/small-business-programs/stabilization-fund/faq>

3. Assistance to Access SBA Loans:

On Monday, 3/16/2020, the SBA announced their disaster declaration regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. King County, along with 13 others in WA, have been approved for disaster loan assistance. Small businesses in the primary and contiguous counties are now allowed to apply for low-interest loans to help during this period.



Eligibility for Economic Injury Disaster Loans is based on the financial impact of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). The interest rate is 3.75 percent for small businesses. The interest rate for private non-profit organizations is 2.75 percent. SBA offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years and are available to entities without the financial ability to offset the adverse impact without hardship.

Applicants may apply online, receive additional disaster assistance information and download applications at <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela>. The deadline to apply for an Economic Injury Disaster Loan is Dec. 16, 2020.

OED offers free accounting and finance consulting services for eligible applicants that need assistance navigating the requirements of the SBA loan application process. Business eligible for this service must have less than 5 employees and be less than 80% AMI.

4. Relief for utility payments:

All SPU and SCL customers can apply for the [Utility Discount Program](#) (UDP) if their financial stability has been jeopardized by COVID-19, regardless of background or immigration status. [Eligibility requirements can be found here](#).

UDP lowers Seattle City Light bills by 60 percent and Seattle Public Utility bills by 50 percent. This allows income-eligible residential customers to access heavily discounted utilities by simply signing a short form that attests to their household income, rather than having to provide income documentation. This will provide immediate and lasting utility bill relief for customers who are unemployed or underemployed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

To learn more about enrollment in UDP, call 206-684-0268 or send an email 24/7 at <http://www.seattle.gov/utilities/about-us/email-question>.

5. Small Business Recovery Task Force:

The Mayor has appointed former Governor Gary Locke and former Council President Bruce Harrell to lead the COVID-19 Small Business Recovery Task Force, which will advise on long-term policy recommendations and provide technical assistance and outreach. A list of Task Force members can be found [here](#).

6. Temporary moratorium halting residential evictions

The moratorium suspends residential evictions related to the non-payment or partial payment of rent for 30 days and also prohibits late fees or other charges for late payment of rent. Property owners may not issue "Pay or Vacate" notices for nonpayment of rent during this period nor initiate an eviction action with the courts.

The order further directs that action upon existing pay or vacate notices cannot be taken. For tenants who must appear in court, the moratorium should be used as a defense. If a tenant does not appear in court, the



court may grant a continuance to allow the matter to be heard at a later date, after the moratorium has lifted.

The temporary moratorium will begin immediately in the City of Seattle for any residential eviction action related to the non-payment of rent. Tenants are required to continue paying their rent if they are able and should work with their landlords on payment plans if they are experiencing financial hardship.

Other actions OED is taking:

Economic Impact Study- To better inform our long-term planning, we are coordinating with regional partners to conduct a survey to capture the economic impact of COVID-19 to small businesses. This will be announced next week and available on our website www.seattle.gov/oed as well as our social media channels.

OED Small Business COVID-19 Weekly Webinar

As this is a rapidly developing issue, we will be holding weekly calls to share new developments, hear about the impacts you are experiencing, and answer your questions. Please join us every Wednesday, from 11:00am- 12:00pm.

- [Register for the webinars](#)
- [View notes and recordings from previous webinars](#)



More COVID-19 Resources

- **City of Seattle COVID-19: Resources for Community**
This page contains information and links for City of Seattle programs and services that may be helpful for residents significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
<https://www.seattle.gov/mayor/covid-19>

- **Washington Governor Jay Inslee**
Find the most recent state-level resources and information regarding COVID-19:
<https://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/covid-19-resources>
 - o **Resources for impacted businesses and workers:**
<https://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/covid-19-resources/covid-19-resources-businesses-and-workers>

- **Seattle King County Public Health**
Stay up to date with the most recent public health developments, advisories and guidelines for King County: www.kingcounty.gov/covid
 - o Information specifically for retail establishments
<https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/communicable-diseases/disease-control/novel-coronavirus/retail.aspx>

- **Washington State Employment Security Department (ESD)**
Rulemaking around Employment is determined by the Washington State Employment Security Department. Track ESD Information for workers and businesses affected by COVID-19 here:
<https://esd.wa.gov/newsroom/covid-19>.
 - o [See who qualifies for specific benefits](#)

- [Seattle Foundation COVID-19 Response Fund](#)

- [Amazon Small Business Relief Fund](#)



Small Business Q&A

Updated 3/16/2020

Labor Standards

Q. How does the Paid Sick and Safe Time (PSST) Ordinance apply during the COVID-19 outbreak?

A. You can find a list of FAQs here: [Paid Sick and Safe Time and COVID-19 – Frequently Asked Questions](#)
Learn more about the Ordinance: <http://www.seattle.gov/laborstandards/ordinances/paid-sick-and-safe-time>

Q. How does the Secure Scheduling Ordinance apply during the COVID-19 outbreak?

A. You can find a list of FAQs here: [Secure Scheduling Ordinance and COVID-19 -- Frequently Asked Questions & Answers](#) Learn more about the Ordinance:
<http://www.seattle.gov/laborstandards/ordinances/secure-scheduling>

Employment

Rulemaking around Employment is determined by the Washington State Employment Security Department. Track ESD Information for workers and businesses affected by COVID-19 here:
<https://esd.wa.gov/newsroom/covid-19>.

Q. 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?

A. 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. 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.

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

A. 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.)

Q. 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?

A. 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 during this time. Basic eligibility requirements for a claim can be found [here](#).



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

A. 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.

- [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.

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

A. Under the emergency rules we put into place as a result of COVID-19, standby may be available to you if you're unemployed because either:

1. Your employer shut down or decreased operations temporarily because an employee is sick and other employees have been asked to isolate or quarantine as a result of COVID-19; or
2. You or your family member received a request to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19.

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.

Please note that these resources change as developments arise, so please check the ESD website for the latest information.

Funding and Other Relief

Q. When will the Stabilization Fund be available and how can I access it?

A. The Stabilization Fund is now open and accepting applications. Learn more and apply here: <http://www.seattle.gov/office-of-economic-development/small-business/small-business-programs-stabilization-fund->

Q. What about businesses that are not eligible for the Stabilization Fund?

A. We are working with the SBA to make Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance available to businesses that need financial help immediately. SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans are just one piece of the City of Seattle's coordinated response, and we encourage business owners to take advantage of the deferral of B&O taxes and relief for utility payments.

Q. How do I get my B&O taxes deferred?

A. Eligible businesses include those that have annual taxable income of \$5 million or less and currently pay City taxes on a quarterly basis. Businesses will have until late 2020 to pay their B&O under this plan. The City



estimates that 20,000 businesses could be eligible for this, based on B&O reporting. You can request deferral by sending an email to tax@seattle.gov with your request and customer number or UBI. For more information, contact Finance and Administrative Services at 206-684-8484

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Q. Where can I find resources on the Governor's expansion of benefit programs?

A. Track information from the Governor's office here: <https://www.governor.wa.gov/>. This includes the [latest expanded benefits programs and resource list](#). These include programs such as [SharedWork](#), which provides partial wage replacement to avoid layoffs, and [standby](#), which suspends the job-search requirement for workers to collect unemployment benefits if an employer must make temporary layoffs.

Public health guidelines

Q. Who is the authority on Public Health guidelines for my business? Is it the county or state?

A. Both. Track public health information from the Washington state Department of Health here: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus> and Seattle King County Public Health here: <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/communicable-diseases/disease-control/novel-coronavirus.aspx>

The Washington State Department of Health has established a call center to address questions from the public. If you have questions about what is happening in Washington, or how the virus is spread, please call 1-800-525-0127. Phone lines are currently staffed from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m, seven days a week. Please note that this call center can not access COVID-19 testing results. For testing inquiries or results, please contact your health care provider.

Q. What should I do if I suspect staff member is at risk for COVID-19?

A: If a staff member meets the most recent criteria for [who should seek medical evaluation for COVID-19](#), it is important to place them in a private room away from others and ask them to wear a face mask. Immediately notify your [local health department](#). They will provide you with guidance.



Q. Where can I find resources around stigma reduction?

A: You can find resources from the county, state, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention here:
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/NovelCoronavirusOutbreak2020/StigmaReduction>

Q. What is the latest guidance for retail and food establishments?

A: Guidance from Seattle King County Public Health was released on 3/1/2020:
<https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/communicable-diseases/disease-control/novel-coronavirus/retail.aspx>

Q. Are the county guidelines for social distancing the same as state guidelines?

A: The Governor's Emergency Proclamation prohibits events with 250 or more people in King, Snohomish and Pierce Counties.

In King County, our Health Officer, Dr. Jeff Duchin, is issuing a parallel local Health Officer Order to prohibit gatherings of 250 people or more. In addition, the local order is prohibiting events of less than 250 people, unless measures are taken by event organizers to minimize risk. Learn more here:

<https://publichealthinsider.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Health-Officer-Order-3-11-20-Q-and-A.pdf>
