
The COVID19 Unemployment Update

President Trump declared COVID-19 (Novel Coronavirus) a National Emergency on March 13, 2020. The declaration provides new guidance and outlines flexibilities that states will have in administering their unemployment insurance programs. The following are the Iowa Workforce Development's latest unemployment updates.

Iowa has released information regarding their response to the effects of COVID-19.

- The state will waive the 1-week waiting period for Unemployment claims to expedite payment of benefits
- The state will also, waive work search requirements and modify the availability requirement
- Employers will be eligible for relief of benefit charge as a result claims paid as a result of COVID-19

Claimants *MAY* be eligible (*dependent if they meet monetary eligibility*) **if:**

- If an employer must shut down operations and no work is available,
- If an employer must lay off employees due to the loss of production caused by the Coronavirus
- If an employer temporarily lays off employees due to any loss or lack of work due to COVID-19
- If an employer requires a worker to stay home for the COVID-19 incubation period (14 days) after travel or contact with an infected person
- An employee is ill because of COVID-19 and unable to work
- If an employer shuts down the business operations because an employee is sick with the COVID-19
- If an employer reduces the hours of work because business has slowed down, Iowa allows for partial unemployment benefits. Impacted employees would still need to report the wages earned per week when filing for benefits.
- Educational Institution employees, which schools close and pay is not continuing
- Employer discharges employee due to obtaining COVID-19 and is hospitalized, failure to maintain contact.

Determined on a Case by Case basis:

- If an employee is in mandatory quarantine because of suspicion of having the Coronavirus
- If an employee contracts COVID-19 and must quit
- If an employee's dependent, family member or child has school cancellations and they must stay home to provide care and must quit

Claimants will be denied benefits if

- If an employee quits work due to fear of coming into contact with the COVID-19.
- Educational Employee during the regularly scheduled break period.

Iowa Q&As for claimants can be found here: https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/sites/search.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/files/content-files/Updated%20-UI%20Worker_COVID-19%20QA.pdf

Employer Considerations

- Businesses considering a major layoff or shut-down, Iowa Workforce Development's Dislocated Worker Program staff can help guidance. Iowa's Rapid Response Team can help ensure compliance with federal regulations that apply to mass layoffs.
- Employers experiencing a slowdown in their businesses or services as a result of the COVID-19 impact on the economy may apply for the Voluntary Shared Work Program. This program allows 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. Visit <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/voluntary-shared-work-frequently-asked-questions> to learn more about how to apply.

Employer Considerations Continued:

- Employers can require an employee to stay at home for the 14 day isolation period if they have traveled abroad or had contact with someone who visited an affected region.

Iowa Q&As for employers can be found here: <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/sites/search.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/files/content-files/Employer%20COVID-19%20QA.pdf>

COVID-19 Scenarios & Benefits can be found here: <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/sites/search.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/files/content-files/March%2018%20update%201%20-%20COVID%20chart.pdf>

Information contained in the bulletin was gathered both independently, as well as utilizing resources obtained from NASWA and the Department of Labor. CCC is in contact with both national and state representatives regarding this issue and will keep you updated as more information becomes available.