
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 Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance's latest unemployment updates.

The Massachusetts Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) has announced that they are filing emergency regulations will allow people impacted by COVID-19 to collect unemployment in the following circumstances:

- The workplace is shut down and expects to reopen in four or fewer weeks. Workers must remain in contact with their employer and be available for any work their employer may have for them that they are able to do, but do not otherwise need to be looking for work.
- An employer may extend the period of the shut-down to eight weeks, and the employees will remain eligible for the longer period under the same conditions described above.
- If necessary, DUA may extend these time periods.
- Hearings are going to be conducted as telephone at the day and time currently scheduled.
- Exhibits are being uploaded to the website, but it is a slow process.
- All future hearings will be scheduled via telephone for the foreseeable future.

Massachusetts has announced that they will now pay unemployment benefits if a worker is quarantined due to an order by a civil authority or medical professional or leaves employment due to reasonable risk of exposure or infection or to care for a family member and does not intend to or is not allowed to return to work. The worker need not provide medical documentation and need only be available for work when and as able.

For Employers:

- Employers who are impacted by COVID-19 may request up to a 60-day grace period to file quarterly reports and pay contributions.
- The pending federal legislation proposes further relief, including additional money for unemployment benefits and relief to employers for charges related to unemployment benefits paid due to COVID-19.

For Claimants:

- The one week waiting period has been waived effective March 16, 2020.
- All requirements regarding attending seminars at the MassHire career centers have been suspended.
- Missing deadlines due to the effects of COVID-19 will be considered good cause, and lateness will be excused.

To learn more go to the notification from Massachusetts here, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-guidance-and-directives#businesses-&-employers>

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.