

IWD releases information on COVID-19

The State of Iowa Department of Workforce Development (IWD) has issued information regarding its response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including information on the impact of recently enacted-federal legislation and phone numbers for employers needing assistance.

Benefit charging. IWD states that all unemployment claims filed and paid as a result of COVID-19 will have the charges waived for employers for a time. As of mid-June 2020, IWD is allowing non-charging to employers until the Iowa Unemployment Insurance trust fund drops below \$950 million dollars. At that time, IWD will begin charging employers so as to maintain the integrity of the trust fund. IWD will announce when this occurs on its website.

In addition, if an employee receives federal extension unemployment benefits as a result of a COVID-19-related business shutdown, the employer will not be charged for those benefits. Any benefits beyond the normal unemployment insurance benefits that are available in Iowa will not be charged to an employer.

Eligibility. Benefits are available to any individual who is unemployed through no fault of their own. If an employer must lay off employees due to the loss of production caused by COVID-19, individuals may be eligible for unemployment benefits if they meet the monetary criteria.

Shared work program. 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 the program and how to apply. Employers in an approved Voluntary Shared Work plan will not be charged for the benefits paid out.