

# Talking UP

## Economic Development UPdates

University Place  
WASHINGTON



March 13, 2020

*Note: This is a special edition of Talking UP to help University Place businesses stay informed about the latest resources available to them in light of the COVID-19 outbreak.*

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### A Message from the Governor:



Governor Jay Inslee has distributed a special COVID-19 message to Washington state businesses and workers that included two specific resources to help make decisions regarding employees, clients and customers during the outbreak:

- The Washington Department of Health, in cooperation with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, has issued important workplace guidelines. Business owners are encouraged to regularly visit [doh.wa.gov](https://doh.wa.gov) for up-to-date statewide guidance. Local public health officials are also posting guidance based on their assessment of local conditions.
- COVID-19 has multiple economic impacts. This includes workers (including hourly) who must stay home, interruptions to supply chains and disruptions to small businesses. The Governor's Office has compiled a list of resources for businesses and workers impacted by COVID-19 that is available on its [website](#) and is regularly updated. These resources include financial assistance such as certain tax filing extensions, payment plans and penalty waivers. It also includes assistance to help answer questions about insurance coverage related to COVID-19.

**In addition, the resource includes employer and worker assistance to help keep highly-trained employees on the job and provide benefits to workers who need to take time off from work**

due to serious illness or to care for a family member with a serious health condition.

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## SBA Announces New Loan Assistance Program

The Small Business Administration has announced it will work directly with state governors to provide targeted, low-interest disaster recovery loans for working capital to small businesses that have been severely impacted by the coronavirus outbreak.

The [SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loans](#) offer up to \$2 million in assistance for a small business. These loans can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing.



### Specifically:

- These SBA loans are available to small businesses and private, non-profit organizations in designated areas of a state or territory to help alleviate economic injury caused by the Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- SBA's Office of Disaster Assistance will coordinate with the governor to submit the request for Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance.
- Once a declaration is made for designated areas within a state, the information on the application process for Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance will be made available to all affected communities.
- These loans may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact. The interest rate is 3.75 percent for small businesses without credit available elsewhere; businesses with credit available elsewhere are not eligible. The interest rate for non-profits is 2.75 percent.
- SBA offers loans with long-term repayments in order to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years. Terms are determined on a case-by-case basis, based upon each borrower's ability to repay.

For additional information, please contact the SBA disaster assistance customer service center at 800.659.2955 (TTY: 800.877.8339) or e-mail [disastercustomerservice@sba.gov](mailto:disastercustomerservice@sba.gov).

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**Staffing Solutions**

As the coronavirus spreads, business owners and managers should be prepared for employee sick days. Be sure your sick leave policies are up to date by understanding [Washington's paid sick leave law](#). If possible, consider telework options or if necessary, scale back your hours rather than close completely due to personnel shortages.



Depending on the length of the outbreak, you may also consider participation in the Washington Employment Security Department's SharedWork program.

According to the department:

- A SharedWork plan can involve as few as two employees or up to all eligible employees at a company. To be eligible for a SharedWork benefit, a participating employee's hours can be reduced by no more than 50 percent. Fringe benefits (health, retirement, paid vacation, holiday pay and sick leave), if offered before a SharedWork plan is established, must be maintained and may be reduced only if the same reductions exist for other employees who are not participating in SharedWork.
- Employees work a reduced work week, and if eligible, receive a portion of their unemployment benefit. For example, if employees working 40 hours a week are reduced by 20 percent (or eight hours), they could receive 20 percent of their unemployment weekly benefit entitlement, in addition to the 32 hours of regular hourly earnings. This enables employers to save money by lowering their payroll costs while retaining a skilled work force. Employees are spared the hardships of full unemployment, receiving more net income than they would if they were fully laid off.
- A SharedWork plan can last up to 12 months. If a plan expires, the company can reapply for another year. Only permanent full- and part-time workers who are eligible to receive regular unemployment benefits in Washington state are eligible for SharedWork. The program is not intended for employees paid on any basis other than hourly.

Interested employers can learn more about the program online at [www.SharedWorkWA.com](http://www.SharedWorkWA.com), by calling 800.752.2500 or by emailing [sharedworkplansect@esd.wa.gov](mailto:sharedworkplansect@esd.wa.gov).

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**Am I Covered?**

If you are wondering if your business is eligible for insurance coverage due to the outbreak of the coronavirus (COVID-19), the Washington State Office of the Insurance Commissioner advises business owners that to be covered against any business losses due to a communicable disease, such as COVID-19, you would need to have purchased an additional endorsement to your policy.



Contact your insurance agent or insurance company directly to find out if you already have this added coverage. If you don't and would like to buy it, you can contact your insurance agent or company to see if it's available. But if you didn't buy the added endorsement prior to the outbreak, the insurer may not want to sell you the endorsement.

**If you have questions, contact your insurer directly or the [Insurance Commissioner's Office](#) at 800.562.6900.**

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## Additional Resources

Jennifer Hales, public safety administrator for the City of U.P., urges business owners and managers to stay abreast of all the latest developments regarding the coronavirus outbreak.

"We will continue to update the City's media channels including the [website](#), UPTV, [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) with the latest news. But we also encourage people to visit the [Centers for Disease Control](#), the [Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department](#) and the [Washington State Department of Health](#)." These sites update regularly so you can rely on them as trusted sources of the most up-to-date information.



The City of University Place is making operational changes to mitigate risks to business owners, residents and City staff. Stakeholders are encouraged to conduct City business or ask questions by

phone or by email and to call ahead prior to a planned visit to City Hall. Email and phone numbers for City staff are available on the [Staff Directory](#) or [Who To Call](#) pages at [www.CityofUP.com](http://www.CityofUP.com).

**Many City events may be postponed or rescheduled for the foreseeable future. Changes may happen quickly, so be sure to check the website for updates or connect with event organizers or contacts prior to heading to an event.**

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STAY CONNECTED:



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