



RESOURCES FOR MONROE BUSINESSES AND WORKERS DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

APRIL 3, 2020



Dear Monroe Businesses;

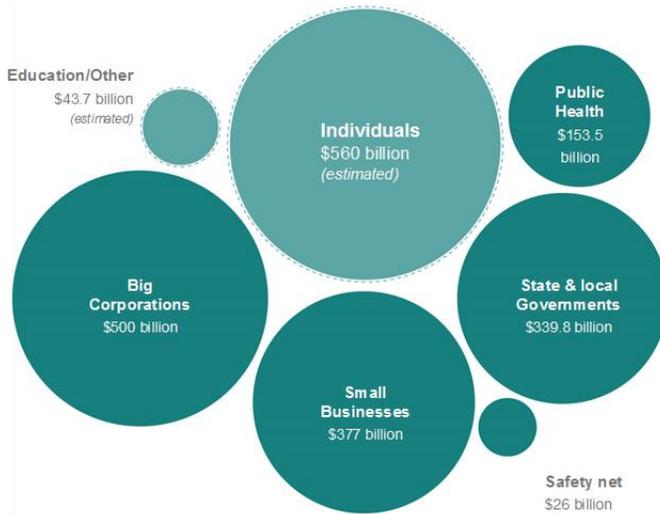
This document will help Monroe Businesses and their workers identify and navigate the various Federal, State and local assistance programs being made available during the COVID-19 crisis. These programs include loans, grants and special considerations for filing taxes and unemployment insurance for businesses as well as information on extended and enhanced unemployment benefits, cash grants, payment moratoriums, student loan relief and other programs for individual workers. For our businesses, we hope that you are working closely with your employee members during this crisis to communicate openly and clearly how you are working through these difficult times to not only ensure their health and safety, but also to do what you can to ensure their long term, employment security as well. It is only in the spirit of cooperation that we will all get through this together.



Due to the nature of the crisis, the Federal and State agencies who are developing these programs are releasing information as rapidly as they can and in some cases may require clarification, or even corrections, later on. Please bear with us as we attempt to provide the most current and up to date information and aggregate it in ways that make it easy to navigate. We will release new information and updates as they become available. Once again, the most up to date information for Monroe Businesses will be available on the City's [Resources for Businesses During COVID-19 Crisis](#) webpage. The scope of the crisis means that rollouts will experience extremely high volumes of demand and therefore may experience temporary delays in accessing the application processes. As we learn to manage our new normal, expectations for quick service, rapid replies, timely turnaround are all being modified to the current situation.

To help with any delays, we are asking that businesses who apply for SBA loans and grants, or have issues with the Employment Security Dept., provide a quick update of your issues to us so we can track this process collectively and escalate to County and State officials where we see key blockages in the system. Email your issues to JPalmer@MonroeWA.gov

The City of Monroe will conduct a virtual Town Hall on Tuesday, April 14, 2020 to answer questions about the information contained herein. Please submit your questions before April 10 in order to give us time to research and provide accurate answers. Send questions to JPalmer@MonroeWA.gov



FEDERAL STIMULUS

The Federal stimulus is broken into focused areas of the economy. For our businesses and workers in Monroe the majority of relief will come from:

1. Individuals
2. Small Business
3. State and Local Governments
4. Public Health
5. Education/Other
6. Safety Net

C.A.R.E.S. Act Summary and Text => [Official Congressional Record](#)

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOR INDIVIDUALS

- UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME CHECK FOR INDIVIDUALS
 - Part of the \$2.2 trillion coronavirus stimulus package is an emergency universal income payment of \$1,200 for most every adult who makes under \$75,000 Adjusted Gross Income a year. Married couples would each receive a check and families would get \$500 per child. That means a family of four earning less than \$150,000 can expect \$3,400. The checks start to phase down after that and disappear completely for people making more than \$99,000 and couples making more than \$198,000. So a person earning \$80,000 would get a check of \$950; a person earning \$90,000 would get a check of \$450; and a person earning \$98,000 would get a check of \$50.
 - If people have not filed a 2019 return, their eligibility will be based upon information from 2018. However, some taxpayers who typically do not file returns will need to submit a simple tax return to receive the economic impact payment. People who receive Social Security benefits but don't file a tax return are still eligible, too. They don't need to file taxes; their checks will be based on information provided by the Social Security Administration.
 - The Internal Revenue Service needs to already have bank-account information on file in order to send out cash via direct deposit. For those who have not received tax refunds via direct deposit, the check will be mailed out. If you have changed addresses since you last



- filed your last tax return, you may want to check with the IRS, who is sending out the checks, to ensure a current address is available if you want to have your check mailed.
- Secretary Mnuchin announced that direct deposit payments would begin on April 17, but this may be “aspirational” as no official word from the IRS or Treasury has been issued regarding the expected delivery other than, “...within the next three weeks.” There are reports that paper checks could arrive as late as June or even July without direct deposit information on file with the IRS. For those who do not have bank information on file with the agency, the Treasury Department has said it will create a web-based system for people to upload their bank information for direct deposit. Go to the IRS website below for information on the basic income check.

[Economic impact payments: What you need to know](#)

- *EXTENDED AND ENHANCED UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS*
 - The Bill increases the benefits and broadens who is eligible. This Bill adds \$600 per week from the federal government on top of whatever base amount a worker receives from the state. That boosted payment will last for four months. For example, if an out-of-work person is receiving the national average of about \$340 per week, under the new federal program their take-home pay will be \$940.
 - The legislation also adds 13 weeks of additional unemployment insurance. People nearing the maximum number of weeks allowed by their state would get an extension. New filers would also be allowed to collect the benefits for the longer period.
 - The Bill provides for Gig workers and freelancers to also apply. Typically, self-employed people, freelancers and contractors can't apply for unemployment. This bill creates a new, temporary Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program through the end of this year to help people who lose work as a direct result of the public health emergency.

Employment Security Department (ESD) Commissioner Suzi LeVine has an update for Washington State on the federal stimulus bill - [Watch the video on YouTube](#)

For more information and to begin the application for unemployment, go to => [WA State Unemployment Benefits](#) Applicants should be aware that ESD is experiencing an EXTREMELY high volume of claims and is experiencing delays. They are currently hiring extra individuals to handle the demand so be patient and keep trying and check back for more updates. If you would like information on those new jobs at ESD go to => [ESD Jobs](#).

- *INDIVIDUAL FEDERAL TAX CREDITS AND FILING EXTENSIONS*
 - The Bill establishes special rules for certain tax-favored withdrawals from retirement plans;
 - The Bill revises other provisions, including those related to losses, charitable deductions, and business interest.
 - The filing deadline has been extended to July 15.



Although these do not put money in your pocket immediately and may require accounting expertise to assist with, they will help lower the costs of accessing funds you may have in your IRA or other retirement accounts as well as lowering your tax liability next year.

- STUDENT LOAN RELIEF

- **Your payments will automatically stop from March 13, 2020, through Sept. 30, 2020.**
- To provide relief to student loan borrowers during the COVID-19 national emergency, federal student loan borrowers are automatically being placed in an administrative forbearance, which allows you to temporarily stop making your monthly loan payment. This suspension of payments will last until Sept. 30, 2020, but you can still make payments if you choose.
- Employers can provide up to \$5,250 in tax-free student loan repayment benefits. Under prior law, both employees and employers faced tax obligations when participating in student loan repayment benefits. This offers a path for employers to engage in long-term solutions for debt-strapped employees.

For more information go to the [Official Federal Student Aid website](#)

FEDERAL ASSISTANCE FOR BUSINESSES

- SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

With respect to businesses, the bill establishes, and provides low interest funding for loans and in some cases forgivable loans and grants, to both small and large businesses. For the purposes of this document we will focus on Small Businesses. The SBA classifies a small business as one with 500 or fewer employees. If you are a branch of a larger corporation with more than 500 employees, your parent company will be applying for specific programs geared towards larger employers. If you are a franchise owner (McDonalds, Subway, etc.) you are considered independent and if under 500 employees qualify for SBA Emergency Loans. Some of the key component of the relief for small businesses:

- The Bill provides \$10 billion for grants of up to \$10,000 to provide emergency funds for small businesses to cover immediate operating costs.
- The Bill provides forgivable loans up to \$10 million per business. Any portion of that loan used to maintain payroll, keep workers on the books or pay for rent, mortgage and existing debt could be forgiven, provided workers stay employed through the end of June.
- There is \$17 billion for relief for existing loans that cover six months of payments for small businesses already using SBA loans.
- The Bill delays due dates for employer payroll taxes and estimated tax payments for corporations



- The Bill changes the rules for expenses and deductions meant to make it easier for companies to keep employees on the payroll and stay open in the near-term.
- The Bill establishes a fully refundable tax credit for businesses that are closed or distressed to help keep workers on the payroll. The goal is to get those employees hired back or put on paid furlough to make sure they have jobs to return. The credit covers to 50 percent of payroll on the first \$10,000 of compensation, including health benefits, for each employee.
- For employers with more than 100 full-time employees, the credit is for wages paid to employees when they are not providing services because of the coronavirus. Eligible employers with 100 or fewer full-time employees could use the deduction even if they aren't closed.
- Small Businesses may be able to access these loans through their local banker. The federal government and the banking community are trying to finalize the details and protocols for how and when the different programs can be implemented. Much of the delay is based on who takes responsibility for fraud, default, etc. The banks want a thorough vetting period if they are going to take responsibility, but the Federal Govt. wants the rollout to be immediate with a shortened vetting process timeline. It is still being negotiated who takes responsibility for bad loans. If you have a long standing relationship with your banker talk to them and see how they may be able to assist you with the process.

For more information about SBA Programs, e.g. eligibility, and to begin the SBA Loan Process go here => [Federal Disaster Loans for Businesses, Private Non-profits, Homeowners and Renters](#)

Accessing the system may be bogged down initially, but keep trying. Getting to the application online is currently the best way available and it's suggested to start the process as soon as you can.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS RESOURCES FOR INDIVIDUALS

The C.A.R.E.S. Act designates \$339.8 billion that will go to the State's "Safety Net." A variety of local agencies and organizations provide services to communities and this money will help them meet the increased demand from individuals deprived of income during the shutdown. The money will be sent down to the State and then local agencies for distribution. This money will also be made available to help city, county and State administrations supplement their budgets impacted by increased demand for services during COVID-19.

- Nutrition Assistance
 - There is \$8.8 billion to give schools more flexibility to provide meals for students. For Monroe School District students, meal service will continue throughout the extent of Governor Inslee's Executive Order for Washington residents to stay at home. For more information on free meals for children, please go to => [Free meals for ALL Monroe School District Children](#)



- **Food stamps:** \$15.5 billion is going to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, also known as SNAP. The money will help cover the expected cost of new applications to the program as a result of the coronavirus. To see if you qualify and or to apply for nutrition assistance please go to => [Washington Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#)
- **Food banks:** The Bill provides \$450 million for food banks and other community food distribution programs. The Sky Valley Food Bank is providing food assistance during the shutdown and is offering “Porch Delivery” distribution. For more information on food assistance go to => [Sky Valley Food Bank](#) If you are fortunate enough to be able to donate to the foodbank, please use the link and click on the “Donate” button. Although financial aid from the Federal Govt. will help the food bank, it doesn’t not cover all their expenses during this unprecedented demand on their services.
- MORE INFORMATION ON RELIEF FOR INDIVIDUALS
 - The Washington State Department of Financial Institutions has developed a list of financial resources for Washington consumers impacted by the Coronavirus.
 - [Financial Institutions Are Open](#)
 - [Unemployment Assistance](#)
 - [Trouble Paying Credit Cards](#)
 - [Mortgage Assistance](#)
 - [Trouble Paying Rent](#)
 - [Paying Student Loans](#)
 - [Short Term and Emergency Loans](#)
 - [Utilities Assistance](#)
 - [Additional Resources](#)
 - The City of Monroe is doing what it can as well. The Mayor has ordered a moratorium on disconnection of water service for non-payment and is waiving all late fees for non-payment of city managed utilities.

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS RESOURCES FOR BUSINESSES

- Small Business Emergency Grant Program (coming soon!)
 - Governor Inslee has created a Working Washington Small Business Grant program using a portion of the State’s Strategic Reserve Fund (SRF). The Department of Commerce is putting the finishing touches to the program’s guidelines and application. This link will become active when they are ready to accept applications so please check the Washington State Dept. of Commerce’s site => [Choose Washington COVID-19 Resources for Businesses](#) for



when that application becomes available.

- *Considerations for WA State Tax Liabilities* - For assistance regarding your Washington State tax liabilities, please go to the WA Dept of Revenue's special COVID-19 website => [Business Relief During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- *Special Information for Employers From WA Employment Security Dept.*
 - [Filing your quarterly tax reports and responding to information requests](#)
 - [Getting help over the phone](#)
 - [Temporary shutdowns: SharedWork, standby, and partial employment](#)
 - [Unemployment and Paid Family and Medical Leave](#)
 - [Paying your employees while they're getting unemployment benefits](#)
 - [Permanent business closures](#)
 - [Requesting relief of benefit charges](#)
 - [State and federal changes](#)
- *Utilities*
 - Regarding payment delays, late fees, etc. contact your utility provider directly. Governor Jay Inslee has called on all public utilities in Washington State to ensure the health and safety of their employees and the public by suspending disconnection tariffs for nonpayment during this emergency; waiving late fees for customers who are out of work or offering customers payment plans; and expanding bill assistance programs for customers who are economically impacted by this emergency. Many utility companies are already doing this. For assistance, contact your utility company.
 - [City of Monroe Utilities](#)
 - [PSE](#)
 - [Avista](#)
 - [Cascade Natural](#)
 - [Pacific Power](#)
 - [Northwest Natural](#)
 - [Washington Water](#)
 - [Snohomish Public Utility District](#)

