



# Coronavirus updates

## COLORADO: CORONAVIRUS BY THE NUMBERS

**Number of cases:**  
**160**

**Number of counties:**  
**19**

**Number of tests:**  
**1,260**

Source: CDPHE

## Update: State and Federal coronavirus rules, mandates

### Mandated restaurant, bar, theater closures

Colorado Gov. Jared Polis ordered the closure of dine-in services at restaurants and bars throughout the state. He also ordered gyms, casinos, theaters, coffeehouses, cigar bars, brewpubs and distillery pubs to close.

The order, effective at 8 a.m., March 17, allows restaurants to continue to serve meals for delivery or carry-out, but not for in-person service. It will stay in place for at least 30 days.

[Read the full rule here](#)

### Emergency paid leave

Employers are required to provide employees up to four days of paid sick time if they are showing flu-like symptoms who are awaiting. This rule is meant to limit the spread of highly contagious disease and enables workers in at-risk occupations to access testing.

[Read the full rule here](#)

### Legislation

**FEDERAL** - On March 14, the House passed the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, a series of measures intended to bolster the safety net for families and workers whose livelihoods and health are affected by the virus. The bill calls for:

- Two weeks paid sick leave and up to three months paid family and medical leave equal to no less than two-thirds of a worker's pay. Applies to employees of businesses with fewer than 500 employees and the government. Companies with fewer than 50 employees can be exempted. Tax credits would offset this cost for businesses.
- Free coronavirus testing for all
- \$1 billion for food security programs including SNAP, foodbanks, delivery service for senior citizens, and children who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch.
- \$2 billion for emergency grants to states to assist with the processing and paying unemployment insurance.

*Status: Pending approval in the Senate, which is expected this week.*

**COLORADO** – The Colorado Legislature suspended its work for at least two weeks starting on March 14.

## Business closures: What are employee options?

### Layoffs

Businesses considering layoffs should encourage employees to contact the Division of Unemployment Insurance at 1-800-388-5515, in Español 1-866-422-0402.

Because of the anticipated backlog, it could take up to six weeks for claims to get approved. Employers who are concerned about employee well-being might consider reducing hours immediately to let folks become eligible for UI while not losing all income entirely.



### Resources

- [File an unemployment claim](#)
- [Unemployment Resource Guide - Eng](#)
- [Unemployment Resource Guide - Spa](#)
- [Work Share Program fact sheet](#)
- [SIDES](#)

Those who work fewer than 32 hours a week and earn less than the weekly amount of unemployment benefits (approximately 55% of the employees average wage) are eligible for unemployment benefits.

## Reduced hours

Businesses whose employees can work reduced hours or remotely should investigate the state's [Work-Share Program](#) which may allow certain employees who have had reduced hours to claim partial unemployment benefits.

To qualify, employers must have reduced the normal weekly work hours by at least 10 percent, but by no more than 40 percent. The reduction must affect at least two out of all employees in the business, or a minimum of two employees in a certain unit.

## Important: Unemployment system overwhelmed

The Unemployment System is currently fielding an unprecedented volume of calls. For the week of March 6, the office handled 400 claims. For the week of March 16, the office received more than 10,000 claims by noon on Tuesday. Every agent has been assigned to handle claims.

Advise employees to attempt filing at non-peak hours and to save often - the system does not automatically save. Online filing remains the best option.

Employers can do their part to expedite the claims process by registering to approve claims electronically (as opposed to by mail) through the [State Information Data System \(SIDES\)](#). Employers are urged to sign up for this service to support their employees.

## Are you still hiring?

The Northwest Colorado Workforce Area is working to identify which organizations are still hiring, who has immediate needs for staff related to coronavirus as well as what jobs are not impacted by the community response.

Please share any open positions in order to help facilitate connections between active job seekers, recently laid off, and those impacted by the current state of emergency.

Workforce center staff will distribute these opportunities to job seekers.



### Covid-19 Open positions and current hiring needs

During the current COVID-19 outbreak, the Northwest Colorado Workforce Area is working to identify organizations that have immediate needs for temporary or permanent work as well as identify openings that are not impacted by the current state of emergency. This effort will work to align job seekers with current opportunities in the community. The Colorado Workforce Center can provide hiring assistance such as initial screening, virtually hosted interviews, job posting assistance, and more.

[LIST AN ACTIVE JOB](#)

## Resources

- [Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program](#)
- [SBDC Disaster Recovery & Continuity Guide](#)

## Available support for businesses

Legislation is under consideration that would mitigate impacts to employer unemployment premiums and provide tax credits to offset employer costs to comply with mandatory sick leave provisions, extended leave and leave to care for a family member or student for which school has been cancelled.

Colorado has not yet been declared a federal disaster area, which means businesses currently don't have access to the [Small Business Association's Economic Injury Disaster Loan program](#). Colorado is expected to be added to the list, but the time frame is unknown.

Governor Polis' request for funding was sent March 16 to the [Small Business Association](#) for inclusion in the SBA's [Economic Injury Disaster Loan program](#).

The SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan program provides small businesses with working capital loans of up to \$2 million that can provide vital economic support to small businesses to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing.

The loan program application is expected to be open to businesses soon.

In preparation, businesses should:

- Carefully complete the application and should be over-prepared with backup documents.
- Communicate first with their current bank/lender to see what loans, deferred payments, or lines of credit are available to them. Businesses who are eligible for financing elsewhere are unlikely to be approved.
- Not all businesses will meet the requirements of the loan. Businesses who have not been eligible for financing in the past are unlikely to qualify.

Business owners can be proactive by gathering key financial documents including:

- Previous three years of federal tax returns for the business
- Previous three years of personal federal tax returns
- A Personal Financial Statement
- Articles of Incorporation
- A Business Plan with Financial Projections might be helpful

The loan program provides small businesses with working capital loans of up to \$2 million to help overcome the temporary loss of revenue they are experiencing.

The Small Business Development center recommends that businesses start tracking their losses as soon as possible. See page 27 in the [SBDC Disaster Recovery & Continuity Guide](#) for guidance.

## Cybercriminals using COVID-19 as cover for scams

Cybercriminals are taking advantage of people looking for information about COVID-19. They're launching phishing attacks and setting up fake websites.

In one reported scam, hackers pretending to represent the World Health Organization (WHO) send an email claiming they have information about how recipients can prevent the disease's spread.

A person may be asked to provide their email password, to click on a link that downloads malicious software, and/or takes them to a portal designed to harvest credentials.



*A malicious website pretending to be a live map for Coronavirus COVID-19 Global Cases by Johns Hopkins University has also been discovered. If you receive a link to a map with this title- do not click on it! Clicking on the website infects the computer with malware.*

- Do not respond to any COVID-19 email from an unknown or unexpected source. Hover your cursor over the sender's address to make sure it is an email address you recognize.
- Use the Colorado Department of Health and Environment (CDPHE) or the CDC as a trusted source for COVID-19 information.
- Charity scams related to COVID-19 are expected. As a best practice, do not provide personal or financial information via email.

## Other Resources

### For business:

- [Guidance for Preparing Workplaces for Coronavirus](#)
- [CDC: Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#)
- [CDC: Keeping the Workplace Safe](#)
- [Division of Federal Employees' Compensation: Coverage for Coronavirus Disease](#)
- [CDLE coronavirus updates](#)

### About the virus:

- [Colorado COVID-19 Fast Facts](#)
- [CDPHE COVID-19 Resource Page](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#)
- [FAQs for Employers on the COVID-19 Coronavirus](#)

## Workforce centers offering virtual and phone-based services

For public and staff safety, the Colorado Workforce Center locations in **Moffat**, **Routt** and **Rio Blanco** counties will be providing service to community residents through telephone and internet communications until further notice.

Job seekers and employers posting jobs can still log on to [Connecting Colorado](#).

### Steamboat Springs:

970-879-3075

[Email](#)

### Meeker:

970-878-4211

[Email](#)

### Craig:

970.824.3246

[Email](#)

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[Unemployment Resource Guide - English](#)

[Unemployment Resource Guide - Spanish](#)

Colorado Department of Labor & Employment

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