

# COVID-19

# CARES ACT

The \$2.2 trillion CARES Act was signed into law by President Trump on March 27, 2020. The CARES Act expands, on an emergency basis, unemployment compensation through December 31, 2020. The Montana Department of Labor & Industry (DLI) recently received full guidance on the Act from the U.S. Department of Labor. DLI is working diligently to make necessary changes to our IT systems to implement all provisions of the Act. Provisions of the Act are as follows:

## Individuals

- UI benefits will be temporarily expanded to cover individuals who are not traditionally covered, including the self-employed, gig-workers, independent contractors, and workers with irregular work history. These individuals would be eligible for weekly unemployment benefits if the individual is out of work due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including temporary orders for all non-essential workers to shelter in place. DLI is awaiting guidance on this provision, please continue to check our website for weekly updates as to the progress of implementation.
- Adds an additional \$600 to the weekly unemployment compensation benefit for full-time workers to the amount received for unemployment related to the COVID-19 pandemic for periods of unemployment occurring prior to August 1, 2020. Individuals who are already receiving UI do not need to reapply to receive this benefit. It will automatically be included in the benefit calculation when it is available. Please continue to check our website for updates on the progress of implementation.
- Adds an additional 13 weeks of benefits for workers who exhaust the typical duration of UI compensation available.

## Employers

- Provides relief in the form of federal funding so that the burden of paying unemployment compensation does not fall solely on employers.

## Individuals & Employers

- Individuals who are offered work that can be performed from home while complying with emergency shelter-in-place or quarantine orders may not refuse to perform that work and still remain eligible for unemployment compensation.
- The Act also expands the list of allowable criteria for claiming unemployment compensation to include many reasons related to the COVID-19 public health emergency, including:
  - Someone who has primary caregiving responsibility for a child or other person due to school or other facility closure.
  - An individual unable to reach employment because of quarantine imposed as a result of COVID-19 public health emergency or advised by health care provider to self-quarantine.
    - Someone scheduled to start work and does not have a job as a result of COVID-19.
    - An individual that had to quit their job because of COVID-19.
    - An individual's place of employment is closed because of COVID 19
    - Individual that is self-employed, seeking part-time employment, does not otherwise qualify for benefits, and fits one of the categories above.
    - Potentially students attending school full time, and other part-time workers

The entire CARES Act can be found [here](#).