

10 Minute Tuesday Webinar Series

COVID-19 and Ohio Unemployment | March 24, 2020



Introducing the 10 Minute Tuesday Webinar Series – short, 10-minute updates every Tuesday morning at 8AM where we share COVID-19 breaking news and resources for business owners and leaders.

Our first webinar in the series was held on March 24th, and discusses COVID-19's impact on Ohio unemployment. We review Ohio's expanded unemployment benefits and how to apply. Here are the top 10 participant questions from the webinar.

You can also watch the webinar recording here: <https://www.ahola.com/ten-minute-tuesday-webinar-covid-19-and-ohio-unemployment/>

Question 1: Does every employer have to file on behalf of their employees?

Answer: Employers planning to Mass Layoff (25 or more employees) should file.



Question 2: Are there other options, other than releasing employees?

Answer: Yes. Employers can reduce hours, reduce hourly/non-exempt wages (the minimum wage in Ohio is \$8.70/hour), or reduce salaried-exempt employees' wages (the minimum weekly wages must be more than \$684 in order to maintain exemption status). Furloughing and temporary layoffs are also an option.

Question #2: If I release employees, are they able to use PTO to get paid?

Answer: Yes. If you have a paid leave policy (also known as PTO) that cites employees will be paid out upon termination, you should pay this out.

Question #3: How long do employees have to wait to file for unemployment?

Answer: There is no longer a waiting period to receive unemployment. Once hours and pay are reduced, employees may apply.

Question #4: While on unemployment do employees still have to provide proof each week that they are seeking employment?

Answer: No, as that requirement has been waived for those released due to COVID-19 in the state of Ohio.

Question #5: Can employees apply for both unemployment and Shared Work Ohio program?

Answer: Yes. As employees move from a salary reduction of 10%-50% they will become eligible for the benefits of the Shared Work Ohio. If salary is reduced to or more than 51% they will move into unemployment benefits.

Questions #6: How long does unemployment last?

Answer: Unemployment can last up to 26 weeks per benefit year.



Questions 7: How much can employees expect to make while unemployed?

Answer: The minimum weekly benefit amount per individual in 2020 is \$134, based on an average base-period wage of \$269. The maximum benefit in 2020 is \$480, but it may be higher for those with dependents.

Question 8: If I already laid people employees off before the EPSLA (Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act) will they qualify?

Answer: Currently (as of March 25th) there are no details regarding the ability to receive 'back-pay' on the new paid sick leave act if your employees were released before April 2nd. Also, EPLSA requires that qualifying employees have been on the company payroll since March 2nd.

Question 9: If an employee goes home sick, does the employer have to require a doctor's note to return?

Answer: This requirement has been waived as hospital systems are lowering non-essential patient visits. You may ask about COVID-19 related symptoms (while limiting any other illness-related questions), send an employee home that looks visibly unwell, or require the employee to take their temperature for instance of fever.

Question 10: What can employers do to help their businesses?

Answer: Employers can apply for Small Business Loans. There are grants becoming available as well. Learn more at <https://www.sba.gov/page/coronavirus-covid-19-small-business-guidance-loan-resources>

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