

How to file for unemployment in Indiana if your job is affected by coronavirus

Indianapolis Star Published March 16, 2020 | Updated 12:38 p.m. ET March 17, 2020

The coronavirus outbreak in Indiana is changing the way we work, eat, and enjoy our leisure time.

It's also causing job interruptions or layoffs for service industry workers, especially those in the bar and restaurant industry, which has struggled with sales over the past few weeks and now faces a [governor-mandated closure to in-person patrons](#) through the end of March.

If the coronavirus has changed your employment situation, here's how you can file now, according to the Indiana Department of Workforce Development.

What has changed

WorkOne Indy office closed to public: The main WorkOne Indy office at 4410 N. Shadeland Ave. is closed to the public until further notice, EmployIndy said on Monday afternoon.

EmployIndy, a branch of the Indianapolis Department of Workforce Development, said the decision was not made easily but puts it in compliance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations to limit non-essential gatherings to no more than 50 people at once. The closure took effect at the close of business Monday.

While assistance will no longer be available on site, EmployIndy and WorkOne said Hoosiers can still file for unemployment insurance online via a computer or smartphone through the Indiana Department of Workforce Development: <https://www.in.gov/dwd/2334.htm>. They also can call the unemployment insurance help line at 1-800-891-6449.

Kate Parrish, spokesperson for EmployIndy, when asked whether the coronavirus outbreak has had an effect on their services, responded in an email that it's their "responsibility in all economic environments to manage any effect that would create conditions where residents will need career services — and this pandemic is definitely one of those conditions."

Parrish said there was an increase in customers who were using their services but couldn't say for sure whether it was because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It is hard for us to say if the uptick in individuals coming into WorkOne Indy is due to COVID-19 or the several Indianapolis WARN notices that have been issued in January and February," she said in her emailed response. "These WARN notices are an indicator of increased job loss and typically impact the number of individuals who access services through WorkOne Indy."

The federal Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act, or WARN, law requires employers to provide 60 days notice in advance of plant closings and mass layoffs that are covered under the law.

Exemption for in-person visits: Under the old rules, Indiana residents were required after receiving their fourth week of benefits to visit their local WorkOne offices in person for a review of their work-search efforts and to learn more about WorkOne services.

The new rule, announced Monday by Gov. Eric Holcomb to contain the spread of COVID-19, means anyone currently receiving unemployment benefits or those who recently received letters requiring them to attend a

Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment orientation workshop at WorkOne Indy are now exempt from visiting WorkOne Indy for the next four weeks or through the week of April 17.

"This will ensure that individuals who may be symptomatic do not have to physically appear to continue their unemployment insurance eligibility," according to the DWD.

The agency also said it will request flexibility under state and federal laws to expand the eligibility for claimants as well as ease the unemployment insurance burdens on employers.

Closure of auxiliary sites: WorkOne Indy said it will temporarily discontinue community services at embedded locations, because of the temporary closure of the Indianapolis Public Library and adult education locations due to the coronavirus.

Curtailing of some services: The DWD said some non-required, onsite workshops may be offered less or be temporarily suspended to accommodate staffing levels that could be impacted by the pandemic. That includes the cancellation until further notice of Wednesdays at WorkOne, a weekly job fair at WorkOne Indy.

What is staying the same

Online services: However, the DWD said Monday that it will continue to provide and maintain resources for job seekers during the outbreak, and it encouraged those seeking benefits to first apply through their website at <https://www.in.gov/dwd/2334.htm>. Information about payment, benefits, claims and vouchers, and answers to frequently asked questions, are available at <https://www.in.gov/dwd/3704.htm>.

Job services: Job seekers will still be available to receive the following services:

Job search assistance
1:1 career navigation
Publicly available computers

Career development tools
Assistance with filing for unemployment benefits

COVID-19: Things to keep in mind

Most Americans have a low risk of being exposed, health experts say.

Most who get sick will have a mild or moderate case.

High risk groups include the elderly or people with underlying conditions such as hypertension or diabetes.

The Indiana State Department of Health hotline is 317-233-7125 from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. and 317-233-1325 afterward.

Symptoms are fever, cough and shortness of breath, [according to the CDC](#). Call your health provider **before** going to a clinic so health workers can prepare.

Free financial counseling

DWD also said Mayor Joe Hogsett's office, in partnership with EmployIndy, will offer free financial counseling through Pete the Planner. Individuals interested in this service can send an email to recover@petetheplanner.com.

Job board, other services

Job seekers also can receive career development tips and additional information to aid their job hunt at workoneindy.com. On employindy.org, the Job Board will remain available and be regularly updated by staff. Call IndyStar digital producer Dwight Adams at 317-444-6532. Follow him on Twitter: @hdwightadams.