

City of Palm Springs

Town Hall COVID-19 Webinar Questions

1. **Q.** For staff who are laid off, is there a way for them to register for health insurance through Covered California at lower unemployment wage rates as opposed to what is likely to be a higher COBRA or Covered California rate based on latest wages?

A. Below is contact information for a Workforce Development partner who may help answer questions related to healthcare for recently unemployed individuals.

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2. **Q.** As a commercial property manager, I am interested in learning more regarding the intersection between CAL OSHA requirements for employers and the responsibilities of commercial property owners, commercial property managers in ensuring workplace compliance.

A. Megan Beaman Jacinto of Beaman Jacinto Law P.C., who presented the information on workers' rights, indicated she is not aware of any obligations for commercial property owners or property managers to ensure that a tenant employer is complying with CalOSHA requirements, unless the property owner or manager may be acting as a joint employer. CalOSHA has a specific regulation defining an "employer" who is bound by its regulations, and case-law and other statutes further outline who is and is not an employer under the law. A property owner or property manager who is concerned that it may be a joint employer should consult legal counsel for an opinion specific to its circumstances.

The other possible intersection that comes to mind in response to this question involves any potential habitability issues which may be the responsibility of the property owner or manager and may be impacting the health and safety of the tenant's employees. Again, the property owner or manager should consult with its own counsel if it has specific concerns on this point as well.

3. **Q.** When will restaurants and nightclubs be allowed to reopen so we can get all of our employees back to work? Is there light at the end of the tunnel?

A. Based on the full Order as issued by the Health Officer of Riverside County on April 6, 2020, it directs that all bars and restaurants shall remain closed until April 30, 2020 pending further Orders or as directed by City Officials. The full text can be found here:

<https://www.palmspringsca.gov/home/showdocument?id=73064>

The order reads as follows:

The full Order as issued by the order of the Health Officer for the County of Riverside and of the County Executive Officer as Director of Emergency Services; Effective 12:00 a.m. on Sunday, April 5, 2020 and continuing through April 30, 2020 pending further Order of the Public Health Officer, the following will be in effect for the County of Riverside (reads as follows):

1e. All bars, adult entertainment establishments, and other business establishments that serve alcohol and do not serve food shall be and shall remain closed.

1f. All restaurants and other business establishments that serve food shall close all on-site dining. All food served shall be by delivery, or through pick-up or drive thru. Social distancing shall be required for person picking up food on site.

4. **Q.** On the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program (Unemployment under the "Cares" act): The LA Times reports this week that the program is "in limbo" in California, because state EDD officials are waiting for more clarity from the Federal government on how this program will work. However, the State of New York IS approving Unemployment claims under this new program. They have figured it out. What can you tell us about this? On the one-time Stimulus checks (\$1,200): There are reports that the money will have to be paid back next year if a person gets a tax refund. Is this true?

A. It is anticipated that the EDD will begin accepting on-line applications for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) on Tuesday, April 28, 2020. You can file a PUA claim through UI Online, just as you would for regular unemployment insurance (UI) benefits. EDD has created a webpage on Pandemic Unemployment Assistance that has information on the eligibility criteria and the provisions of the program once operational. Their page will be updated as information becomes available, including when and how to apply for the PUA benefits.

To view EDD's Pandemic Unemployment Assistance visit:

https://www.edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019/pandemic-unemployment-assistance.htm

The Economic Income Payment also referred to as stimulus check that will be sent are advanced payments of a new refundable tax credit for the 2020 tax year.

Your 2020 tax return and any refund you're due when you file that return in early 2021 will not be affected. The stimulus checks is not considered taxable income and it does not have to be paid back. They're officially addressed in the CARES Act as a "Recovery Rebate for Individuals."

The IRS is using information from 2019 tax returns, or 2018 for those who haven't filed yet, to determine how much taxpayers will be eligible for with the stimulus checks. There are income limitations based on your filing status. The maximum amount is \$1,200 for individuals or \$2,400 for married couples; an additional \$500 will be granted for each qualifying dependent child under 17.

Disclaimer: This information may not apply to your specific tax situation. Please direct any tax preparation and filing questions to a professional tax preparer or the [Internal Revenue Service](#) (IRS). The City of Palm Springs cannot answer specific questions about your tax situation or assist in the tax filing process

Sources:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/advisor/2020/04/06/dont-worry-the-1200-stimulus-payment-wont-cut-into-your-tax-refund-next-april/#2a5cadb5ea8b> ;
<https://taxfoundation.org/federal-coronavirus-relief-bill-cares-act/#16>

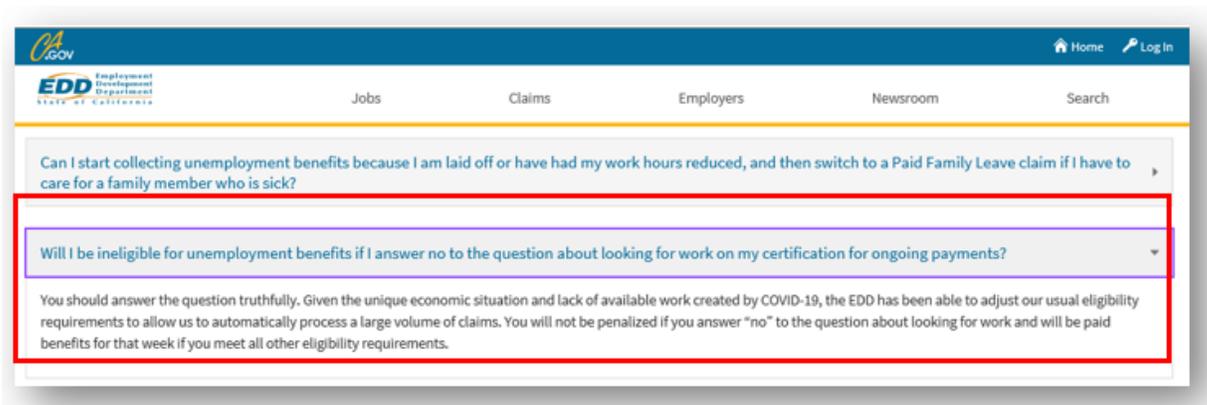
5. **Q.** If we are already approved for Regular UI, do we need to apply for the Extended UI Cares Act portion?
A. The EDD began paying an additional \$600 on top of current weekly benefits on Sunday April 12, 2020. Claimants do not need to do anything to receive this extra funding. The EDD will automatically add the full \$600 to each week of current benefits that are paid every two weeks, as long you are eligible for at least \$1 in a regular payment each week.

6. **Q.** Is rent going to be frozen in Cathedral City? What kind of relief for renters is there besides no evictions?
A. At this time, we are only aware of statewide executive orders for protection of renters from eviction along with relief from local utility companies in the form of waiving late fees and utility shut offs due to non-payment during the COVID-19 emergency. Since your residence is in Cathedral City, we are providing you with the contact information of the city staff at your local municipality for assistance with your specific questions. Please contact:

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7. **Q.** Due to Covid19/Shelter at Home I lost my job and have had to file for unemployment. Filing for unemployment requires you to “look for jobs in order to be eligible for unemployment”. How do we comply when jobs we are qualified for are not available due to Shelter at Home requirements. What steps should I/we be taking so we can be eligible for unemployment?

A. According to the EDD (see screenshot below), you will not be penalized if you answer “no” to the question about looking for work and will be paid benefits for that week if you meet all other eligibility requirements.



8. **Q.** DAP has set up a testing site ... after you meet general COVID guidelines is the testing open to any PS resident?

A. Due to the constantly changing circumstances on who should be tested for COVID-19, plus the short supply of COVID-19 testing kits, it is recommended Desert AIDS Project be contacted directly with this question. DAP has a COVID-19 hotline which is 760-992-0407, or you may visit their website at www.desertaidproject.org.

9. **Q.** Will parking restrictions near Lykken Trail be lifted perhaps after 4/30, the chain link gate was up but the sign said open?

A. The City does not have any gates on our hiking trails, nor did we employ chains in those areas. The only areas we have chained off are the tennis and pickle ball courts. It is possible this is in reference to the hiking trails owned and maintained by the Band of Cahuilla Indians.

10. **Q.** Hotels in Palm Springs, or the valley as far as that is concerned, cannot and should not remain closed until June 19. Should the blanket closure be lifted, hotels need time to build incoming reservations as they don't come in "overnight". June 19 seems way too long in everyone's mind. Why not be more realistic with a shorter opening date. Should there be a need to keep hotels closed, it would be better to notify those with reservations on that date with cancellation notice while keeping the reservations systems open for future sales.

A. On April 2, 2020, the County of Riverside's Health Officer and the Emergency Services Director issued an Amended Order concerning Short-Term Lodging Facilities. The Amended Order identifies that the Short-Term Lodging restrictions shall be in place effective immediately and will remain in effect until June 19, 2020, pending further Order of the Public Health Officer. The Amended Order also defines "short-term lodging facility" as: any facility, including short-term rentals, vacation rentals, timeshares, hotels, motels, and other short-term lodgings, which provides lodging or accommodation to persons for a time period of sixty (60) days or less. A copy of this Amended Order is available here:

https://rivcoph.org/Portals/0/Documents/CoronaVirus/April/Riv-EOC_20200402_140602.pdf?ver=2020-%2004-03-123325-757×tamp=1585942421867

On April 9, 2020 Governor Newsom Announced A New Program to Provide Front-Line Health Care Workers with Hotel Rooms. The program will provide hotel rooms to health care workers who have exposure to or test positive for COVID-19 at no cost or low cost. Hotels interested in participating in offering discounted rooms to health care workers may email covid19lodging@dgs.ca.gov.

View press release here: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/04/09/governor-newsom-announces-new-program-to-provide-front-line-health-care-workers-with-hotel-rooms/>

11. **Q.** I was getting unemployment benefits, ran out end of February. Had a phone interview with a company March 13th. They wanted to meet me in person, the following week then all hell broke out. Now I am waiting until who knows when to get a job, not my fault. Through the \$2b package how do I start unemployment again? I have no income, I haven't been tested not sick. How do I reapply for unemployment?

A. The CARES Act includes a provision establishing a new 13-week extension of benefits paid for by the federal government when someone exhausts their regular state UI claim between March 29, 2020 and the end of 2020. Details for this benefit have not yet been released. You can check the website below for updates.

https://www.edd.ca.gov/about_edd/coronavirus-2019.htm

Information on re-opening a claim can be found at this link.

<https://www.edd.ca.gov/unemployment/Reopen-A-Claim.htm>

12. **Q.** For short term rental license holders who have first all festivals cancel and then a moratorium until June 19, what are the possible stimulus funds? I do not have employees or pay any wages.

A. It may be helpful to consult with the Small Business Development Center (SBDC). Even though Funding for the SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Program has been exhausted, there is a strong likelihood these funds will be replenished. The SBDC can assist you with applying for new business assistance funding. Watch for updates by visiting:

<https://covid19relief.sba.gov/#/>.

You can reach the SBDC by calling (800) 616-7232 or visiting

www.Coachellavalleysbdc.org

13. **Q.** Will there be mortgage relief included for property owners that own multiple properties and where they have tenants?

A. Contact and work directly with your mortgage servicer to learn about and apply for available relief. Participating lenders will work with borrowers to provide additional relief after 90-day grace period upon a showing of continued COVID-19 related financial hardship. Participating financial institutions can be found at:

<https://dbo.ca.gov/covid19-updates-fi/>