



Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of Washington State
Celebrating Unity and Civic Participation



Washington State Commission
on Asian Pacific American Affairs

COVID-19 APA Stakeholder Conference Call (Zoom Platform)

Date/Time: Friday, April 3, 2020, 9:00- 10:00 a.m.

Zoom ID: 557 137 713

Link to participate: <https://wsu.zoom.us/j/557137713>

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I. Department of Health: Paj Nandi, Jessica Baggett

We have received questions about who should get tested:

- The most common symptoms of COVID-19 are fever, cough, and shortness of breath. If you have been exposed to someone with laboratory confirmed COVID-19 and are experiencing these symptoms, contact your doctor to see if you need to be tested.
- Your health care provider will make the call about testing based on your individual situation and symptoms.
- Whether you're tested or not, the best thing to do at this time is to stay home and practice social distancing and good hand hygiene.

Testing locations:

- The state public health lab is one of many labs across the state that can process COVID-19 samples. Right now, we can test about 200 samples per day with a 48 hour turnaround time.
- We acknowledge that although the laboratory test is becoming more broadly available, there are still limitations in our public health and healthcare systems' capacity.
- A number of local health jurisdictions are operating community based drive through testing sites, and some health care systems are also standing up drive through sites.
- One example of this in King County is International Community Health Services clinics. I'd recommend checking their website for information at www.ichs.com.

Cost of testing- although this does not fall within the purview of the department of health I do have some information I can share:

- The Office of Insurance Commissioner announced that it will require insurers to waive copays and deductibles for COVID-19 testing. The Office of the Insurance Commissioner has information on their website at www.insurance.wa.gov.
- The Health Care Authority is working with insurance carriers across the state. If you don't have health insurance, visit the Washington Health Benefit Exchange website. They have information



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available in 20+ languages. <https://www.wahbexchange.org/new-customers/application-quick-tips/language-resources/>

How can you help?

- The Department of Health is enrolling and activating emergency volunteer health practitioners for the COVID-19 response. While an emergency proclamation of the Governor is in effect, health practitioners licensed in another state may practice in Washington without obtaining a Washington license if they are in good standing in all states of licensure and are registered in the volunteer health practitioner system. Health practitioners licensed in Washington can also enroll to be an emergency volunteer health practitioner. Visit www.doh.wa.gov/coronavirus to download the emergency volunteer health practitioners application form.
- Other ways you can help:
 - The Department of Enterprise Services is seeking bulk donations of PPE for our health care providers.
 - Another great thing you can do is donate blood! Our community is in need, and we don't want to have one health crisis lead to another.
 - Practice good hand hygiene, cover your coughs and sneezes in your elbow, and stay home.

Regarding accessibility:

1. **All general public materials** – translated into 26+ languages. This effort includes key documents like “what to do if you’ve been exposed to COVID-19” and information for people caregiving for loved ones.
 - a. Available here:
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/NovelCoronavirusOutbreak2020/HealthEducation>
2. **Coronavirus Website** – Developing top language landing pages/sites to centrally locate and house all language materials. We will create specified landing pages for at least the top 15-20 languages spoken in WA state.
 - a. Pages that are currently up (or in the works) related to the API community include: Chinese (simplified & traditional), Vietnamese, Korean, Amharic, Hindi, Punjabi, Tagalog, Khmer, Japanese, Marshallese, Thai, and Samoan. More languages
 - b. Access these pages via the language buttons on our main COVID-19 DOH page:
<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Emergencies/Coronavirus>
3. **Multi-lingual media outreach and online campaigns:**
 - a. Launched a **COVID-19 Public Education and Stigma Reduction campaign** in Spanish, Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese (top social media languages, based on our data).
 - b. This “**Spread the Facts**” campaign can be accessed here:
<https://coronavirus.wa.gov/spread-facts>
 - i. Partner Toolkit link: <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/spread-facts/partner-toolkit>



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- c. Campaign to include drop-in articles in community newspapers.

Seattle Chinese Post - digital
NW Vietnamese Weekly - digital
NW Asian Weekly - digital

- Placed translated banner ads on their digital news webpages; started March 30 and will run through the end of April.
- Starting on April 3, banner ads will run in Chinese and Vietnamese through the digital display ad network (i.e., paying an ad network to place banner ads across multiple platforms/websites/apps where each audience spends the most time).
- d. Partnering with two local radio stations to keep the community informed in their preferred languages: **Hankook NW Korean Radio** and **Hubbard Chinese Radio Seattle**.
 - i. Both radio stations serve communities in King, Pierce, and Kitsap Counties and will include 30-second ads.
 - ii. Plan to connect directly with listeners by conducting interviews with DOH staff so communities have opportunities to engage in real time conversations.
- 4. Set up contracts with certified interpreter & translators to provide **urgent translation** (as close to real time) turn around on breaking news and critical public health information. Currently have this available for some API languages, more in the works. Current = Simplified & Traditional Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese.
- 5. Ensure COVID-10 hotline (**1-800-525-0127 and press #**) has **telephonic interpretation services** available and that the call center information (and availability of language services) is advertised in multiple languages.
- 6. Share information about setting-up telephonic interpretation services with other response partners to aid in addressing other language access barriers.
- 7. **Developing partnerships** with community organizations & grass roots groups that focus on the needs & implications of the response for LEP communities. Received funding for this work.
 - a. Will focus on supporting organizations and groups that expand our efforts to culturally and linguistically diverse communities that we are struggling to reach, especially those with limited written proficiency, communities who don't prefer to access/receive information online, and communities who speak less common languages throughout WA.
- 8. Creating health promotion materials **utilizing graphics and illustrations** to convey key COVID-19 messages and concepts to low literacy audiences. Graphics/comics/materials will also include translated text.



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9. Creating **communication cards with key graphics & “I speak” messages**. These will be distributed to health care providers, partners, and mobile testing sites to aid in communication between a patient and provider in the case of a language barrier (e.g. patient can point to symptoms on chart, point to language/interpretation need, etc.).
 - a. This was a direct resource ask from the deaf/hard of hearing community to help them identify the need for an ASL interpreter and communicate critical information to a provider.

10. Recognizing that written language isn't always the most effective. Partnering with UW School of Public Health and Northwest Center for Public Health Practice to **engage directly with different linguistic groups** across WA to gain a deeper understanding of preferred methods for communication.

This will include a deeper dive into the following language groups: Hill Tribes Language Groups, Pacific Island Language Groups, Vietnam Era Language Groups, South Asian Language Groups, Central Asian Language Groups, and common languages of the Indian sub-continent.

II. Department of Commerce, Robb Zerr

- Managing director for rural & small businesses
- Much of relief coming from federal level through SBA loan program
- https://www.business.wa.gov/site/alias_business/1561/covid-19.aspx
 - o Google translate because things are changing at such a rapid rate
- To help with application process, Commerce is contracting with various orgs (will be listed on page on Monday) to get language access

III. Employment Security Department, Mariana Hernandez

- Main goal is to get workers get paid as quickly as possible
- Processing as many **applications**, as quickly as possible
- Must have 680 hours or work in the past 12-18 months (base year)
- Must be U.S. Citizen or have authorization to work in the U.S.
- Can apply for unemployment online 24/7 or on the phone at 1-800-318-6022
- Long wait times, language assistance available at no charge over the phone.
- Emergency rules implemented.
 - o Work search requirement optional
 - Will not be penalized if not looking for ~~further~~ work
 - Flexibility for claimants
 - DOL saw the need, made it available to states
 - o Up to 12 weeks of standby can be requested by worker or employer
 - Allows part time workers to apply for standby
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)
 - o Extension of benefits for 13 times the weekly benefit amount



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- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)
 - Separate benefit program to cover many people who do not qualify for regular UI
 - Self-employed
 - Independent contractors
 - Those without 680 hours of work in their base year
- Federal pandemic unemployment compensation
 - Additional \$600 per week on top of state UI and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)
 - Is available for anyone who has been receiving unemployment, and people who qualify for HPUA

IV. Department of Social and Health Services, Babette Roberts

DSHS ESA Community Services division is working hard to implement some of the relief offered in the Families First Coronavirus Relief Act as they relate to SNAP. Most immediately related to that bill is the “emergency supplemental benefit”. Under the act, states can choose to increase the benefit allotment for the months of March and April up to the maximum allotment amount based on household size. (as you may know, benefit allotments are typically based on household size, income, and other factors). We hope to issue the additional amount for March sometime this week or early next week (still pending IT work) as a supplemental benefit, and the April emergency supplemental will be added to their normal issuance. We’re still working to determine if Pandemic EBT is possible given the data collection/matching required by USDA to implement.

We’re also suspending some treatment monitoring and medical evidence sources requirements related to ABD and HEN in an effort to ensure social distancing and reducing the burden on medical providers while we continue to ensure clients have access to benefits.

COVID-19 OVERVIEW

COVID-19 continues to impact many Washingtonians, including those served by the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) through WorkFirst. These impacts come in the form of illness, missed work caused by illness and economic disruptions, lack of child care due to center closures, K-12 school and early learning closures, and reduced activity opportunities due to site closures at our Employment Security Department (ESD), Commerce Department (Commerce), and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) partners, as well as the need to reduce face to face interactions in our Community Services Offices (CSOs). During this uncertain and challenging time, DSHS views the COVID-19 pandemic as an event outside of the control of WorkFirst participants. Therefore, participants have good cause based on WAC 388-310-1600 (3) for not participating in required activities. In response, DSHS is taking the actions listed below to support those we serve and mitigate the spread of the virus:

TANF TIME LIMIT EXEMPTION

On April 1, 2020, DSHS’s Community Services Division (CSD) filed an emergency rule to expand the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) 60 month Time Limit Extension (TLE) to support



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families experiencing hardships due to the COVID-19 emergency. Families who have exhausted their 0 months on TANF cash assistance and are experiencing hardships due to COVID-19, will not be denied benefits. The Governor's declaration of a statewide emergency enables the department to offer a temporary extension to families who do not meet the criteria for any another hardship but are still unemployed and ineligible for unemployment benefits. If the family is financially eligible and is experiencing additional barriers due to the COVID-19 crisis, they will continue to receive TANF assistance while the emergency is in effect. We anticipate that this policy change will positively impact approximately 80 families each month who would have otherwise been denied assistance.

SUSPENDING THE WORKFIRST SANCTION PROCESS, INCLUDING HOME VISITS

As of March 16, 2020, WorkFirst staff will temporarily suspend WorkFirst Sanction Reduction or Termination penalties due to concerns surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. WorkFirst services will be offered each month, however, if a participant does not continue to engage in their activity, no adverse action will be taken as a result of non-participation. Participants have good cause for non-participation since it is due to an event outside of their control. This also suspends the need for a home visit by our staff as part of the sanction process. This policy is temporary and will end when the outbreak is over.

EXEMPTING WORKFIRST PARTICIPATION FOR GOOD CAUSE

All WorkFirst participants are temporarily exempt from required participation. Clients can choose to continue participation and, to the extent possible, we will continue case management, but participation will not be required. This is based on the Governor's declaration that schools close until April 27, and in anticipation that early learning and childcare providers will follow suit. Again, this policy is in response to emergency conditions and will end when the outbreak is over.

EXPANDING DESK-SIDE AND TELEPHONE WORKFIRST ORIENTATIONS

All WorkFirst Orientations will be conducted desk-side, with the option of utilizing the telephone in order to conduct the orientation when appropriate in place of scheduled group classes. This expands a process currently piloted in a number of CSOs. Our goal is to reduce the instance of requiring WorkFirst participants to gather in groups for WorkFirst-related events/activities, or reporting to the CSO for tasks that may be completed by telephone. This is to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

SUSPENDING HOME VISITS FOR THE TEEN LIVING ASSESSMENT

In compliance with Federal law, DSHS conducts a Teen Living Assessment (TLA), which may include a home visit, for all unmarried, minor parents applying for TANF cash assistance to determine eligibility and offer support to the household. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the home visit will be suspended until further notice beginning March 16, 2020. WorkFirst Social Service Specialists (WFSSS) are responsible to make their best effort to determine a safe living environment and situation, for the teen and their child, by completing all required assessment screening tools in the office or over the phone.



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CONTINUING PAYMENT FOR WORKFIRST WORK-STUDY AND COMMUNITY JOBS PARTICIPANTS

Community Jobs and WorkFirst work-study participants will continue to be employed and receive payment even if they are temporarily unable to participate due to emergency operations changes or closures as a result of COVID-19. This aligns with directions for the Federal/State work-study participants.

Finally – we know that shifting to a Call Center only access model coupled with increased application rates has caused some longer wait times and higher disconnect rates in our Call Center. Applicants and current clients can submit applications and recertifications online at WashingtonConnections.org. We are working to add resources to the Call Center and ask for everyone's patience as we meet the increased demand.

V. Office of the Attorney General, Bre Weider

- AGO tracking
 - o Public charge went into effect a couple of weeks ago
 - Watching Trump administration's actions around grants coming in
 - Seeing what is/isn't considered a public charge
 - Monitoring, filing suit
 - Want to ensure that everyone can get assistance regardless of legal status
 - o Tracking zoombombing
 - Heard that white supremacists have been using it to harass people
 - o Hate crimes and bias have been happening against AAPI communities
 - Data not yet available
- What should people do?
 - o Make sure you're safe—move to a safe place as needed
 - o Call 911 to report crime
 - We need folks to report to better understand, track what's happening on the ground
 - Understand that people have a myriad of reasons for not wanting to interact with police
 - Trying to find ways to get a line/website with community orgs for reporting incidents if they do not feel comfortable interacting with law enforcement
 - o Resources available for crime victims regardless of legal status
 - WA State Crime Victims hotline
 - Trained advocates who will help people find advocacy, crime victims centers, crisis intervention, etc.
 - Compensation available if you are a victim of a crime
- Getting media attention to this issue
 - o Monitoring the situation
 - o Work group is open to the public—happening on Zoom and conference calls

VI. Q&A



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Will the legislature hold a special session to address the issues caused by COVID-19?

There does not seem to be plans to hold a special session yet, though this could change at any time depending on how the situation evolves.

How does someone who does not speak English access unemployment information online?

All applications are online or over the phone. Telephonic interpretation available upon request.

What unemployment assistance is available for folks who are undocumented?

At the moment, unemployment benefits are only available to those who are legally authorized to work in the U.S., which is determined through a verification system with the Department of Homeland Security.

How do you file for unemployment if you are self-employed?

There will likely be some relief available for people who are self-employed, but it would be in a program separate from current unemployment benefits, and is contingent on the details of the federal stimulus package. More information will be updated on ESD's website as it becomes available.

Why have I been denied for unemployment benefits?

There have been errors with denials because the system was not designed for this volume and many of the unique circumstances of caused by COVID-19. Standby denials are being reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

What is the best way for service providers to get in contact with DSHS?

It depends on service providers, as DSHS is a large agency with many different divisions. Long term care service providers, for instance, should contact the long term care division.