



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DES Announces Expansion of Shared Work Program to Support Employers, Employees

PHOENIX – (May 4, 2020) The Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) today announced the expansion of the Shared Work Program to help keep more Arizonans employed in their jobs and receiving pay during the COVID-19 public health emergency. The Shared Work Program is an alternative to layoffs that allows employers to divide reduced work or hours among a specific group of affected employees and allows those employees to receive unemployment insurance benefits to make up for their reduced hours.

“Employers are faced with difficult decisions to maintain their businesses during the COVID-19 public health emergency. The Shared Work program is another tool they can use to support their employees,” said Tom Betlach, from the Office of the Director. “We are expanding the ways employers can qualify for the program to provide more options to keep Arizonans working and getting paid.”

The Shared Work Program allows employees to continue working at reduced hours, receive a portion of unemployment insurance benefits and receive the additional \$600 weekly benefit provided by the CARES Act through July 25, 2020. Participating in the Shared Work Program can help employers impacted by COVID-19 retain their existing, experienced workforce, avoid administrative and training costs of hiring new employees in the future, and improve morale among employees.

DES is temporarily increasing the eligibility for employers to qualify for the Shared Work Program by adjusting the maximum reduction of hours from 40% to 60%. This increase means, for example, that an employer can reduce an employee’s hours from 40 hours/week to 16 hours/week and still qualify for the Shared Work Program if the employer continues to provide employees with health and retirement benefits.

To participate in the Shared Work Program, employers must complete an application and receive approval from DES. Additional changes to Arizona’s Shared Work Program are expected over the next few weeks, as DES implements guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor. DES will share updates to policies and procedures through the [Shared Work Program webpage](#).

Unemployment Benefits

Last week, unemployed Arizonans received \$140.8 million in unemployment compensation, which included the \$600 in additional weekly compensation provided by the CARES Act. For more information about Unemployment Insurance, or to apply, please visit www.azui.com.

ARIZONA@WORK

ARIZONA@WORK partners with businesses facing layoffs to provide customized solutions for their needs. One of the most effective strategies includes customizing Rapid Response activities to help Arizona businesses minimize layoff events. These activities are intended to help retain employees, upskill current employees and keep businesses open. To learn more about statewide services for employers, please visit www.arizonaatwork.com.

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