



## April 6, 2020: Stay Home, Stay Healthy updates from Skagit County

Good afternoon-

News about COVID-19 changes often. We want to make sure you have the most up-to-date information so you can make the best choices for yourself and your family. Here are your updates from Skagit County:

- As of 4:00 p.m., April 6, 2020 Skagit County has 166 laboratory confirmed cases of COVID-19 including 21 hospitalizations and 4 deaths.
- Skagit County Health Officer Dr. Leibrand recommends everyone wear face masks in public.
- Our leaders in Skagit County are working hard to keep your family safe and healthy. To view a message from them, [visit here](#).
- Our Skagit Health Connection blog has a [new post: Mail- best friend or menace? Is mail the highlight of the social distance day or a sneak invader?](#)
- No more cash at County transfer station: In an effort to reduce personal contact, Skagit County Solid Waste will no longer accept cash payments at the Skagit County Transfer and Recycling Station on Ovenell Rd. This began Saturday April 4, 2020, and continues until further notice. Only credit card or check payments will be accepted from self-haul customers. This will not affect the Clear Lake or Sauk Transfer Sites. For more information, please call the Transfer Station at 360-416-1570 or visit [skagitcounty.net/PublicWorksSolidWaste](http://skagitcounty.net/PublicWorksSolidWaste)

### **Health Officer recommends wearing masks**

Skagit County Public Health is now recommending that all people wear fabric masks in public.

Skagit County Public Health Officer Dr. Leibrand is **recommending** that face masks/coverings be worn in public and for any group gathering, including workplaces, to help prevent the spread of infection. Dr. Leibrand recommends that all protective measures should be used for any group gathering, and that wearing a mask is considered an additional layer of protection.

This recommendation is not a substitute for existing guidance to maintain 6-feet of physical distance from others and frequently wash hands with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizer. Wearing cloth face coverings **will not prevent** the spread of COVID-19 without these other protective measures.

### **Financial Resources for Small Businesses, Individuals and Families:**

On April 2, 2020, Governor Inslee extended the order to “stay home, stay healthy” until May 4, 2020.

We recognize that this directive presents an economic hardship for many Skagit County residents, many of whom may already be struggling to cover basic expenses like housing, transportation and food.

If you or a family member is employed by a non-essential business, self-employed or a small-business owner, options are available for seeking financial assistance.

#### For Individuals:

- **Unemployment Benefits through the Washington State Employment Security Department.** Unemployment benefits are for those who are out of work, whether that be furloughed, laid off or placed on standby. You can apply for unemployment benefits over the phone or online. For further information on how to apply, visit [esd.wa.gov/unemployment](https://esd.wa.gov/unemployment)
- **One-time economic impact payment through the CARES Act.** In the coming weeks, the Treasury Department and the Internal Revenue Service will provide a one-time economic impact payment to tax filers. Payments will be dependent on income; filers with an income exceeding \$99,000 for individuals or \$198,000 for joint filers with no kids are not eligible. For more information please visit: [irs.gov/newsroom/economic-impact-payments-what-you-need-to-know](https://irs.gov/newsroom/economic-impact-payments-what-you-need-to-know)
  - **If you are a senior, disabled veteran or a low-income taxpayer and do not usually file taxes, you will need to submit a 2019 tax return in order to receive a check.**
- **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance for gig workers and freelancers.** The CARES act also created a new pandemic unemployment assistance program for workers who do not usually qualify for unemployment benefits but are being impacted by COVID-19. This assistance will be available through the Employment Security Departments unemployment benefits program (see above). Check in with ESD for guidance on applying if you are a gig-worker, freelancer or self-employed.
- **Basic Food Assistance.** As of March 30, [some Washington residents who receive Basic Food benefits will have additional funds available for March and April 2020](#). Congress approved extra benefits up to the maximum allowed for each household. In Washington state, this means the Department of Social and Health Services will be able to provide additional benefits to approximately 277,000 households!
- **Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits.** WIC is open statewide and delivering benefits remotely. For families whose situation may have recently changed due to COVID-19, they may qualify for WIC. Call 1-800-322-2588 for additional information.

#### For Small Businesses:

- **SharedWork through the Employment Security Department.** SharedWork allows eligible businesses that have been shut down or reduced operations due to public health directives to have up to fifty percent of their employees' pay provided by unemployment benefits. Employers must apply to be in the SharedWork program. More information is available at [https://esd.wa.gov/newsroom/covid-19-employer-information#Temp\\_shutdowns](https://esd.wa.gov/newsroom/covid-19-employer-information#Temp_shutdowns)
- **Standby.** Employers can request that their employees be placed on standby with the Employment Security Department. This allows your employees to collect unemployment benefits without having to look for work.
- **Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Loans.** The federal government recently made COVID-19 an eligible disaster for economic injury disaster loans (EIDL) through the SBA. You can apply online at [covid19relief.sba.gov](https://covid19relief.sba.gov)
- **Local economic development organizations.** One of the greatest resources we have in Skagit County is a robust network of economic development professionals who are working hard to help small businesses survive during this time. For business advice, assistance applying for programs listed above, and for information about additional resources you can contact:
  - Economic Development Alliance of Skagit County, 360-336-6114
  - Skagit County Small Business Development Center, 360-899-9369

