

## **Business Information and Assistance Concerning COVID-19**

As businesses throughout Frankfort, the Commonwealth and the country continue to shutter their doors in an effort to slow the spread of COVID-19, many, especially small business owners, are left to wonder how they might survive this quarantine period. There are a number of possible plans of action and available assistance from a variety of organizations. Below is a list of agencies and their assistance programs that will help those businesses and/or their employees. **This list will be updated each week.** **The highlighted areas are new to this document.**

### **U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)**

The SBA, Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear's Office and the Cabinet for Economic Development together are working quickly to qualify the entire state for SBA disaster certification. With that certification in place, small businesses anywhere in Kentucky that have been harmed by the COVID-19 pandemic will be eligible to apply for low-interest SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans. The program is going to lend up to \$2M per small business that meets the requirements. Those loans are meant to pay debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that cannot be paid because of the coronavirus' impact. The loans will be fairly competitive at about 3.75% for up to 30 years. This doesn't mean everyone wants to get a 30 year loan, but it does show that the SBA is being extremely flexible in this loan program to allow businesses to stay up and running.

That certification should be in place soon at which point businesses can apply online for SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans at [www.sba.gov/disaster](http://www.sba.gov/disaster). There is also a number they can call directly to get SBA assistance. The customer hotline is 1-800-659-2955.

### **Kentucky Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**

The Kentucky SBDC is proactively preparing for the worst with regard to the developing Coronavirus situation. They stand ready to engage in contingency planning and financial management tools with their small business clients. While there is no single cure-all, there are many steps a business owner can take to manage through the difficult times and position the business for future growth. Their offices are still open, but if you don't want to meet in person, our business coaches are available to meet via Zoom web conference or phone to develop a plan of action for your business. You can contact them at <https://www.ksbdc.org/contact>.

### **Commonwealth of Kentucky**

Gov. Andy Beshear on Tuesday, March 17 issued guidance on public-facing business closures. Details can be found here: <https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=GovernorBeshear&prId=95>

The Governor is holding daily news conferences to provide the latest COVID-19-related announcements. These are live streamed to his Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/GovAndyBeshear/>.

Each briefing is available on the Governor's [YouTube channel](#) and is followed by a news release, available at [www.kentucky.gov](http://www.kentucky.gov).

Employers and residents can stay up to date on the latest Kentucky COVID-19 information at: [www.KyCOVID19.ky.gov](http://www.KyCOVID19.ky.gov)

- **Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet**

The Commonwealth of Kentucky is waiving the waiting period for unemployment for those who are losing their jobs because of COVID-19 and will waive any work-search requirements while Kentucky's state of emergency is in effect.

The Kentucky Career Centers will provide unemployment services when employees become unemployed at no fault of their own. Those workers can receive a small amount of money to help them make ends meet during unemployment. That money comes from unemployment insurance. Unemployment insurance is funded by payroll taxes. To file a claim for unemployment insurance benefits, the job seeker must be separated from his/her employer or experience a reduction in your work hours.

Resources:

- Rapid Response unemployment insurance [Fact Sheet for Job Seekers](#)
- Kentucky Career Center [unemployment insurance assistance locations](#)
- 10 Tips for a better [unemployment insurance experience](#)

- **Kentucky Cabinet for Economic Development**

Kristina Slattery, executive director of the Office of Business and Community Services, will take point on handling and directing the Cabinet's COVID-19-related business inquiries to our project managers, KY Innovation staff, the communications team and others within the Cabinet.

You may contact the Cabinet for Economic Development at: (502) 564-7670 or [econdev@ky.gov](mailto:econdev@ky.gov).

**Families First Coronavirus Response Act (H.R. 6201) (There is likely an additional stimulus bill to follow.)**

- The Act expands the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) by providing job-protected paid leave to employees of public agencies of any size and employers with fewer than 500 employees for certain coronavirus-related conditions (these are restrictive so be sure you know exactly what is included). This leave applies to any employee who has been working for their employer for at least 30 days and includes leave to comply with a recommendation or order by a public health official or health care provider that the individual should be quarantined because of possible exposure. Employees are allowed but not required to use accrued personal or sick leave for the first 10 days. After the first 10 days, employers must compensate employees at a rate not less than two-thirds of the employee's regular rate of pay while the employee is on leave. For employers with 25 or more employees, they must make reasonable efforts to return the employee to an equivalent position following their leave. There is a narrow exemption for

positions that may not exist due after the economic downturn. If that happens, the employer still must contact the employee if a position comes available within one year after the employee's leave. Employees who take FMLA leave unrelated to COVID-19 do not qualify for the expanded protections. Employers with fewer than 50 employees may apply for a hardship waiver. Health providers are also exempt. Parents will be eligible for three months of paid family leave if their children's schools are closed.

- H.R. 6201 also requires that public agencies with more than one employee and employers with fewer than 500 employees be required to provide full-time employees eighty hours of paid sick leave for specific COVID-19 related issues. Part-time employees are entitled to a number of hours related to the number of hours they work on average. The employees must be compensated at their regular rates of pay or applicable minimum wage, whichever is greater, but is limited to \$511/day and \$5,110 total. Employees using sick days to care for a family member may be paid at two-thirds of their regular rate or applicable minimum wage, whichever is greater, but is limited to \$200/day or a total of \$2,000.
- The Act provides a number of tax credits for employers which include: payroll credit for required paid sick leave, credit for sick leave and family leave for specified self-employed individual, and payroll credit for paid family leave. There are similar tax credits for self-employed.
- The Act also provides \$1billion in emergency unemployment insurance relief to the states. Employers must notify employees at the time of separation of the availability of unemployment insurance. The Act also eases several of the eligibility requirements for unemployment compensation for separated employees, including work search requirements. Employees will not be required to perform a work search under this provision. Our hope is that all will be returning to their current employment once the COVID-19 is contained. All employees can go through the Kentucky Office of Employment and Training at the links above to file for unemployment insurance.

### **Kentucky's Department of Financial Institutions (KDFI)**

The KDFI has issued guidance to Kentucky-chartered financial institutions to work with customers affected by the coronavirus to meet their financial needs. The KDFI encourages state-chartered banks, credit unions, and other financial service providers to implement policies and procedures to work constructively with customers by waiving overdraft and/or minimum balance fees, restructure existing loans, extending loan repayment terms and providing easier terms for new loans. (You can read a similar statement of the federal reserve at

<https://www.federalreserve.gov/newsevents/pressreleases/bcreg20200309a.htm>)

### **Travel industry**

The travel industry is one of the largest economic sectors and will be one of the hardest hit by the Coronavirus. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) reported that up to 50 million travel and

tourism jobs are at risk around the world due to the pandemic. This impacts not only the people who travel, but the people who work in the travel industry: hotels and motels; restaurants, transportation; food and beverage; entertainment, etc. However, experts at Tourism Economics expect a full recovery of the travel industry by 2023, based on how the travel industry recuperated from past slumps. Although the President has promised support to the industry, no stimulus proposals have been introduced. However, on Tuesday, industry leaders met with President Trump and Vice President Pence to request aid. The hotel industry made request for \$150 billion in the form of direct grants to keep employees on the payroll. The broader travel industry requested an additional \$100 billion and the airline industry requested \$50 billion.

### **Kentucky Farm Bureau**

Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance Company is temporarily suspending insurance policy cancellations that result from non-payment of premiums. Contact your local KFB Insurance Agent or the Customer Service Team at 800-206-6887.

### **Internal Revenue Service**

Per IRS Notice 2020-18, the federal government has extended filing and payment due dates for 2019 income tax returns until July 15, 2020. Governor Beshear has also announced that KY Income taxes will be extended to that same date. Notice 2020-18 applies to individuals, trusts, estates, partnerships and corporations. Taxpayers DO NOT have to file forms with the IRS to request this extension.

### **Kentucky Chamber Launches Who's Hiring Campaign**

As COVID-19 continues to develop, many businesses are experiencing layoffs while others are ramping up hiring efforts. The Kentucky Chamber will be working in partnership with the state government by connecting those experiencing job loss to industries across the state currently in need of talent. If you have an employment opportunity, visit <https://www.kychamber.com/news/coronavirus/covid-19-whos-hiring> and let them know so they can help recruit candidates to your team!

### **COVID-19 Resource Request**

The business community and our resources are crucial to helping ensure our medical professionals have what they need during this pandemic. Governor Beshear is attempting to identify manufacturers and suppliers throughout the Commonwealth who can manufacture or provide items for Kentucky's response to the coronavirus. If you can provide or manufacture the following, please reach out to the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce at this link: <https://www.kychamber.com/news/coronavirus/ppe>

- N95, N99, N100, R100, P100, P99, P95, R95 particulate respirator (medical or industrial grade)
- Nitrile gloves (S,M,L,XL)
- Gowns (medical grade-isolation)
- Face shields (full face)
- Droplet masks
- Medical grade thermometers
- PDI purple wipes

- Disinfectant spray
- Hand sanitizer (65% alcohol minimum)
- Bottles for hand sanitizer
- Glycerin
- Hydrogen Peroxide
- Sterile 55 gallon metal drums
- 16 and 32 oz. pump plastic bottles

### **Free Digital Tools**

As many companies move to a fully remote workforce for the first time, digital tools like Skype and Zoom are our friends more than ever. The document automation software PandaDoc has just launched a free e-signature plan for small and medium-sized businesses to make sure business can continue as usual without physical signatures. Here are a few Virtual Office and Meeting Apps that may help you.

Microsoft Teams – TEAMS comes standard with your Office 365 account, and will allow you to start one-on-one video calls or conference calls with groups. However, Microsoft is offering anyone its premium version of TEAMS for free for six months and has lifted existing user limits on its free version.

Google Hangouts – For anyone who uses the Google Suite for corporate email, Google Hangouts comes standard with your subscription, and provides one-on-one video calls or conference calls groups. Google is also offering its enterprise videoconferencing features for free to G Suite and G Suite for Education customers through July 1, 2020.

Slack – Slack is a market leader, but it doesn't come standard with any email service providers like the two above. Still, it provides the same capability. This works on desktop and mobile devices. They are offering a free version for small teams and a nominal monthly fee for small-medium size businesses.

Zoom – There is a free version of Zoom that allows you to host up to 100 individuals at once for up to 40 minutes. There's a user-friendly version available for both desktop and mobile devices.

Privy – Privy is a technology partner that helps capture and convert your website visitors into loyal customers, is launching 'A Call To Shop Small' in midst of the COVID-19 crisis. To be included, simply submit your store [here](#).

1Digital - Search engine optimization (SEO) is a core component of any ecommerce strategy. Now that COVID-19 has pushed many brands into the digital sphere, optimizing your SEO has never been more important. To help small businesses stand out in a sea of competitors, **1Digital**, a BigCommerce agency partner, is offering a complimentary SEO audit at <https://www.1digitalagency.com/bigcommerce-seo/>.

Klaviyo - Klaviyo, a marketing automation platform, is taking it to social media to connect with small businesses. The technology partner is sharing content and daily metrics related to COVID-19 on their Twitter account. You can follow them here: <https://twitter.com/klaviyo>.

Lifesize - Lifesize, the world's first global 4k video conferencing technology, is [offering free, unlimited video conferencing](#) to all global businesses for six months.

Blogging for Business - Hosted by Ahrefs, [Blogging for Business](#) will take you through 10 tutorials to teach you how to grow your blog beyond 100K monthly visitors — and how to convert your thousands of readers.

Digital Marketer - Digital Marketer is offering a [complimentary Lab membership](#) for the month of March — which may be extended longer depending on how COVID-19 progresses. The Lab membership includes 36 marketing checklists and execution plans, 11 certifications and master courses, access to an exclusive, members-only Facebook group, and weekly updates and live trainings.

Creator Academy - Looking to expand your YouTube channel? [Creator Academy](#) is currently offering free courses. Topics span across getting started, content strategy, production, channel optimization and more.

Twitter Flight School - Twitter also is also offering complimentary education on their platform known as [Twitter Flight School](#). Topics include, but are not limited to, getting started with Twitter Ads Manager and creating and executing video campaigns.