



The Shared-Work Program

If you are facing a temporary decline in business, the Shared-Work Program offers you an alternative to laying off workers.

The program, operated by the Employment Security Department, allows you to reduce the work hours of your full-time employees, while the workers collect partial unemployment benefits to replace a portion of their lost wages.

The program helps you retain your skilled workers, reduce your payroll costs and avoid the expense of recruiting, hiring and training new employees when the economy improves.

Participation

Any company, large or small, can participate as long as the company is registered in Washington for at least six months prior to applying for the program.

Your participating employees must:

- Be full-time and hourly;
- Have worked at least 460 hours for you in the quarter prior to the quarter you applied for Shared Work;
- Be eligible for regular unemployment benefits; and
- Be able and available to work all hours offered by the shared-work employer.

The Shared-Work Program is not for slowdowns that are an expected part of an industry or business. The program cannot be used to support seasonal businesses during the off season or companies that traditionally use part-time employees.

The application

Shared-Work application packages are available to download at www.esd/wa.gov/business. Complete the application and participant list and forward to the Employment Security Department's Shared-Work Administrative Unit. You will receive an eligibility decision either approving or denying the plan within 15 working days. If approved, your shared-work plan is effective in two weeks or less, unless you request a later start date.

The process

If approved, we will send you a letter with an initial supply of participant applications and other claim information. Participating employees must complete the forms and return them to your designated employer representative, who will forward them to the Shared-Work Administrative Unit.

Employees can receive up to 52 weeks of shared-work benefits in each one-year plan as long as there is a balance available. The weeks do not need to be consecutive.

You will deal directly and exclusively with the Shared-Work Administrative Unit on all matters about your plan and your participating employee's unemployment claims.

We will mail an unemployment claims kit directly to your participating employees' home.

Participating employees can file their weekly claim on the Internet or by phone. However, the Internet is the fastest way to file.

Plan changes

To add or delete an employee, simply complete the appropriate form in your shared-work handbook and mail or fax it to the Shared-Work Administrative Unit at Employment Security.

Requirements

Length of plan

A shared-work plan can last up to one year. If your request is for less than a year, it still counts as your one plan for the year. In most instances, it is best to open a plan for the full year so it will be available if you need it.

Reductions in work hours

You must reduce the weekly work hours of your participating employees by at least 10 percent, but not more than 50 percent. For example, the work schedule for a full-time employee who typically works 40 hours a week must be reduced by at least 4 hours, but not more than 20 hours.

Health benefits

The health benefits you provide to your employees must continue as though you did not reduce their work hours. You are still eligible to apply for the program if your business does not normally provide fringe benefits to your full-time workers.

Company representative

You must designate a company representative to manage your shared-work plan with Employment Security.

If your business is represented by a union, the collective-bargaining agent must approve the plan in writing for the participating employees.

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800-752-2500

Reapplying

If you want to apply for a new plan when your shared-work plan expires, you must complete another application and participant list.

You must submit the new plan at least 45 days before your current plan expires. Each application is reviewed on its own merits. Approval of a previous plan does not guarantee that we will approve a subsequent plan.

Once you complete two successive shared-work plans, we will not consider a new application until one year has passed.

The bottom line

The Shared-Work Program saves you money and keeps your skilled work force intact.

Employees are spared the hardships of full unemployment, realizing more income than if they were fully laid off.

To learn more about the Shared-Work Program, call 800-752-2500 or talk to a business representative at your local WorkSource office.

Information also is available online at www.esd.wa.gov/business. A short video talks about the program and the site also provides other valuable information.

A track record of success

“Spectra Lux is a small aerospace manufacturing company trying to succeed during these tough economical times, and the Shared-Work Program has helped us. Without this program, I don’t know where we would be today, and the program has been accepted so well with our employees.”

*Scott Hudson, Human Resources
Spectra-Lux Corporation, Redmond*

“The Shared-Work Unit of the Employment Security Department has enabled EZ Loader Boat Trailers to operate with little disruption of production and keep a work force satisfied during a period of economic slowdown.”

*William D. Baker, Dir. of Human Resources & Risk Mgmt.
EZ Loader Boat Trailers, Spokane*

“The Shared-Work Program has aided our small company in retaining employees and their health benefits during a difficult economic climate. All of us here at Orca Marine Cooling Systems appreciate the benefits and service of the Shared-Work Program, and thank you for your fine work in administering it.”

*Diane H. Trunek, Vice-President
Orca Marine Cooling Systems, Bellingham*

“The Shared-Work Program helps us maintain our competitive advantage during tough times. It lets me keep my key people - a lot of the trained people who have the skill sets I need - until things pick up.”

*Terry Schweyen, Owner
ASAP Metal Fabricators, Yakima*

The Employment Security Department is an equal opportunity employer and provider of programs and services. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to people with disabilities. Auxiliary aids may include qualified interpreters and telecommunication devices (TTY) for hearing - or speech - impaired individuals. Individuals with limited English proficiency may request interpretive services free of charge to the customer in order to conduct business with the department.

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A smart alternative to layoffs



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