

Arizona Unemployment Insurance Expanded in light of COVID-19

By [Barney M. Holtzman](#)

By Executive Order, Arizona expanded eligibility for unemployment benefits to individuals whose employment is affected by COVID-19 and forbid the adjustment of employers' contribution rates based on benefits paid under the Executive Order.

The Executive Order waives certain requirements for terminated employees:

- Individuals **need not wait a week** after they lose their job to apply for unemployment benefits. (Normal rules impose a one-week waiting period before applying for unemployment benefits.)
- Individuals **need not meet the work search requirements** to continue receiving unemployment benefits. (Normal rules require individuals receiving benefits to (a) be able to work; (b) engage in a systematic and sustained effort to obtain work during at least four days of the week; and (c) make at least one job contact per day on four different days of the week.)

If an individual meets existing requirements regarding work history, earnings, and residency, the Executive Order expands unemployment benefits to:

- Individual whose employer has permanently or temporarily ceased or drastically reduced operations due to COVID-19 resulting in a reduction of wages;
- Individuals who, due to requirements that the individual be quarantined, are not able to work and do not have any available paid leave even if the individual has an expectation of returning to work after the quarantine is over;
- Individuals that leave employment due to a risk of exposure or infection or to care for a family member who has been infected with COVID-19; or
- Individuals that for any other scenario are separated from work for reasons related to COVID-19, if the Arizona Department of Economic Security determines that such scenario is consistent with the guidance issued by the United States Department of Labor for Unemployment Compensation for Individuals Affected by the Coronavirus Disease 2019.

The expanded benefits will not punish employers. The Executive Order instructs the Arizona Department of Economic Security not to consider unemployment benefits granted pursuant to the Executive Order against an employer's account.

March 23, 2020

Page 2

[Mesch Clark Rothschild](#) remains open and available to advise those with legal needs through these uncertain times. Please reach out to discuss any [employment](#), [estate planning](#), [construction](#) or [other legal need](#) at (520) 624-8886.