

COVID-19

Government financial assistance



The Government has announced financial assistance for businesses affected by COVID-19. E tū's position is that you should be paid when you need to be away from work because of COVID-19. The Government has acted to ensure that employers who need assistance with wages can get it. You may have additional entitlements in your collective agreement which can be applied at this time.

What kind of financial support can my employer get to help keep me employed?

Your employer will be entitled to a subsidy of \$585.80 per week for a full-time employee (in this case anyone who works more than 20 hours per week) or \$350.00 per week for a part time employee (anyone working less than 20 hours per week), if certain criteria are met.

The payment will be made as a lump sum for a period covering 12 weeks. This financial support is to ensure that employers are able to (pay their staff/keep the business going).

To receive this assistance, your employer must meet some requirements. They must be able to show that they have or will have a decline in revenue related to COVID-19. Employers will also need to declare that they will continue to employ the affected employee at a minimum of 80% of their income for the 12-week subsidy period. For a full-time worker, this is the equivalent of keeping people working 4 out of 5 days of the week.

There are specific requirements an employer must establish to get the subsidy. The union will be seeking to require all employers to seek the subsidy as an alternative to laying workers off or reducing worker income.

If I am unable to work because I am in self-isolation, sick with COVID-19, or caring for others with COVID-19, what kind of financial support can my employer receive to pay me for this time?

The government will subsidise wage costs for employers if a worker needs to self-isolate as determined by Ministry of Health Guidelines or cannot work because they are sick with Covid-19 or caring for self-isolated dependents or dependents sick with COVID-19.

The maximum amount per person is \$585.80 per week for full-time workers (20 hrs or more) or \$350 per week for part time workers (less than 20 hrs). The payment is paid to the employer for on-payment. It is not available to those who can work from home during the period of self-isolation, and who can be paid normally by their employer. Employees are not required to have used and or all of their paid leave entitlements before their employer can receive this payment.

Your employer will need to apply for this payment. The payment is made by the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) to your employer, who will then be required to pass it on to you. MSD will pay your employer fortnightly once it receives an application

If I currently receive the Working for Families/ In Work Tax Credit (IWTC) but my hours are reduced, what happens?

Usually, sole parents need to be working at least 20 hours a week and couples with children need to be working 30 hours a week to be eligible for the IWTC. If your hours are reduced (due to COVID-19), the government proposes future steps to ensure you will continue to receive that payment.

If I lose my job, what kind of financial support can I receive?

If you lose your job you may be entitled to support from Work and Income. You should contact Work and Income on 0800 559 009 to discuss this as soon as you can. Previous stand-down periods will not apply.

Benefit payments will increase by \$25 per week from the 1st of April 2020 and the winter energy payment will double for this year to \$40.91 for a single person, and \$63.64 for couple and those with dependents.