

## COVID-19 Update From EKA – April 10, 2020

EKA's media, government, public relations and crisis support services teams are tracking the state, local and national government responses to the COVID-19 Pandemic. This update has been prepared for informational purposes and is compiled from publicly available sources and is not intended to be legal or tax advice. All hyperlinks below are live and will bring you to the information mentioned.

### Californians To Get An Extra \$600

The US Department of Labor revealed that 925,450 Californians filed initial claims during the week ending April 4. This makes for a record-breaking three-week period during which nearly two million claims were filed in California, representing roughly 10% of the labor force. Over the weekend, the US Department of Labor ("DOL") [issued guidance to the states](#) regarding the federal benefits provisions in the CARES Act related to unemployment insurance. Typically, Californians who qualify for unemployment receive a maximum of \$450 per week as long as they are actively looking for work, and that assistance can last for up to 26 weeks.

As a result of the new guidance, Governor Newsom said Californians would receive an extra \$600 in weekly unemployment benefits. The first payment is going out Sunday to those with already-processed claims and is for the week ending April 11. They will be credited to the state Employment Development Department debit cards. The [guidance](#) clarifies eligibility for Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation ("FPUC") benefits. Among other things, the FPUC benefit, authorized under Section 2104 of the Cares Act, provides an additional \$600 weekly payment for individuals who are collecting regular unemployment compensation.

## COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

### COVID-19 Website for Businesses

The County has created a very informative website for businesses. The website contains a great deal of information on how businesses can obtain assistance during this health emergency. Click [here](#) to be directed to the website. This is one website that you will want to bookmark.

### Possible Extension of Rent Repayment Period from 6 to 12 Months

On Tuesday, April 14, the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors will likely discuss revisions to the March 19<sup>th</sup> [Executive Order](#) as directed by Supervisor Solis at the March 31 Board of Supervisors Meeting. The Motion directed County Staff to report back within seven (7) days on the suggested recommendations put forth in the Motion related to further revision to the March 19 Executive Order. The recommendations include:

- Expansion of the County's temporary eviction moratorium to include cities in Los Angeles County, not just cities in the County's unincorporated areas, with considerations for cities that already have local eviction moratoriums in place;
- Extension of the payback period for past-due rent. Under the Executive Order, currently in effect, renters have six (6) months following the termination of the Executive Order to

repay unpaid rent due. The Motion is recommending the extension of the payback period to twelve (12) months or more after the termination of the Executive Order;

- Modification of language in the current Order to lessen the documentation requirements which requires renters to demonstrate an inability to pay rent and/or related charges due to financial impacts related to COVID-19.

The Motion also directed staff to provide additional recommendations and resources to improve protections for renters, workers, unhoused individuals, owners, and businesses of Los Angeles County during the COVID-19 Pandemic. While the requested report is not yet available, it is anticipated that the report will be discussed at the next Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, April 14.

### **LA County COVID-19 Business Assistance Program**

The Board of Supervisors is expected to discuss the establishment of the LA County COVID-19 Relief Fund and the LA County COVID-19 Business Assistance Program. The Board is expected to authorize relevant Departments to enter into agreements or necessary amendments with community-based nonprofits, banks, foundations, community development financial institutions, and philanthropic organizations that have demonstrated expertise and capacity to assist the LA County Development Authority with the implementation of the Relief Fund. To learn more, click [here](#).

### **Board of Supervisors Meeting Information:**

Meeting Date: April 14, 2020, Meeting Time: 9:30 A.M. To listen to the live Board meeting by phone, please call 877.873.8017 and enter the access code when prompted. Access Code for English: 111111 To watch the live Board meeting via the web, click [here](#).

### **COVID-19 Incident Update**

The County issued its latest high-level summary of the LA County Emergency Operation Center's COVID-19 disaster response. This incident update includes the number of confirmed positive cases of COVID-19 among Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and Los Angeles County Fire Department employees. To read the update, click [here](#).

## **CITY OF LOS ANGELES**

### **LA Cares Corps**

Mayor Garcetti announced the formation of [LA CARES Corps](#), a partnership between the City and County of Los Angeles, to provide small businesses with assistance in applying for [federal loans](#) that can help them survive the COVID-19 crisis. Federal relief established close to \$350 billion for two different Small Business Administration (SBA) loan programs: Economic Injury Disaster Loans and the Paycheck Protection Program. Small business owners can find a clear explanation of the two emergency loan programs and directly access applications. Click [here](#) for more details. There is also a dedicated call-in center at (833) 238-4450, where counselors trained in completing SBA loan applications can offer live assistance. For businesses that are not

eligible for an SBA loan, LA CARES Corps can share information on how to apply for the City's Small Business Emergency Loan or obtain assistance through a BusinessSource Center.

### **Mobile COVID-19 Testing For Seniors**

Mayor Garcetti said that the Los Angeles Fire Department can deploy rapid mobile teams to assist with training for COVID-19 testing at elder care, assisted living, skilled nursing, and other facilities that serve populations most vulnerable to the virus. Facilities that have a resident with symptoms — or where healthcare workers suspect a possible COVID-19 outbreak — can find more information about mobile testing services by clicking [here](#). Earlier this week, the Mayor announced an [expansion of free testing](#) to all LA County residents with COVID-19. Any LA County resident showing symptoms of COVID-19 can schedule an appointment at a testing site by clicking [here](#).

## **LONG BEACH**

### **Request for Medical PPE:**

Various qualifying organizations in need of PPE, including healthcare facilities, medical providers, shelters, adult daycare and long-term care facilities, may request supplies via the City's [longbeach.gov/COVID19](http://longbeach.gov/COVID19) website under "[Resources for Healthcare Providers](#)."

### **Equipment Donations to the City:**

To streamline and manage the donations and offers of assistance to the City of Long Beach, the City also has developed an online [form](#) that can be completed by local businesses and community volunteers who are interested in providing assistance. The new form will help the City organize donation offers such as business facility use, transportation and delivery services and personal protective equipment. Additionally, donations of food and hygiene kits for persons experiencing homelessness and offers of volunteer services in a variety of skill areas are captured by the form. All information provided is electronically safeguarded for privacy and reviewed to determine the best match with City operational needs.

### **Creation of an Online Exchange for Facial Coverings:**

Face masks and coverings for an individual's personal use can be purchased through [a marketplace](#) created by the *Long Beach Post* in partnership with the City of Long Beach. Mask makers and businesses can register via the [Vendor Registration form](#). The *Long Beach Post* and City are not receiving commissions from the sale of products through the marketplace. N95 or surgical-type masks should not be used by participating vendors, as they should be reserved for medical workers.

## **SACRAMENTO**

### **Executive Order on Upcoming Elections**

In light of stay-at-home and physical distancing orders due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, Governor Newsom signed an executive order to address upcoming local elections. Three local special elections that have been scheduled for May and June will be held as all-mail ballot

elections. Local election officials can also make in-person voting available, to ensure every voter has an opportunity to vote, but only in a manner consistent with public health and safety, including appropriate physical distancing. The upcoming elections impacted are a May 19, 2020 special recall election in the City of Santa Ana; a June 2, 2020 special municipal election scheduled in the City of Commerce; and a special recall election in the El Rancho Unified School District, also scheduled for June 2, 2020. A copy of the Governor's executive Order can be found [here](#) and the text of the Order can be found [here](#).

### **Program to Provide Front-Line Health Care Workers with Hotel Rooms**

Governor Newsom announced a new program to provide doctors, nurses and other critical front-line health care workers access to no-cost or low-cost hotel rooms. The program will prioritize health care workers who come in direct contact with or are suspected of having direct contact with COVID-19 patients, or who test positive for COVID-19 but do not require hospitalization. By providing hotel rooms in close proximity to medical facilities, health care workers can avoid potentially spreading the virus once leaving their shift by selecting to stay in one of the pre-identified hotels across the state.

Starting April 10, California Health Corps workers will be able to make reservations through the Department of General Services (DGS) CalTravelStore. The state has already identified 150 hotels that have opted in to provide discounted rates, and more hotels are encouraged to sign up. Hotels interested in participating in offering discounted rooms to health care workers may email [covid19lodging@dgs.ca.gov](mailto:covid19lodging@dgs.ca.gov).

The Governor announced a partnership with [United Airlines](#), which will provide free, round-trip flights for volunteer medical professionals from across California and the country who join the state's health care workforce. The airline will connect essential workers and supplies to the areas where they are needed most during the COVID-19 Pandemic with daily flights.

The Governor recently [launched the California Health Corps](#), an initiative to expand California's health care workforce and recruit health care professionals to address the COVID-19 surge. Health care professionals with an active license, public health professionals, medical retirees, medical and nursing students, or members of medical disaster response teams in California are all encouraged to join. So far, 86,516 have signed up through [healthcorps.ca.gov](http://healthcorps.ca.gov).

### **Legislative Hearings on California's COVID-19 Response**

Senate President pro Tempore [Toni G. Atkins](#) and Assembly [Speaker Anthony Rendon](#) issued the following statement to announce COVID-19 hearings next week:

As we remain on legislative recess to do our part to help flatten the COVID-19 curve and work from our districts to help our constituents through this time of crisis, we in the Senate and the Assembly are planning committee hearings to be held before the full Legislature returns to the Capitol. Each house is finalizing preparations to hold hearings within the next two weeks, focusing on the state's COVID-19 spending. We strongly believe the Governor and his team are working diligently on the behalf of Californians, but we promised the people of California we

would provide this oversight when we passed emergency COVID-19 funding in March. Details will be forthcoming from the Assembly and the Senate as the hearings are finalized. The need for continued physical distancing and other related considerations mean these hearings will work somewhat differently from past hearings in order to make every effort to ensure public participation and protect public health."

### **200 Million Medical Masks Per Month For California**

Governor Newsom said the state is going to spend \$1 billion to scour the world for medical supplies. The Governor said he has secured deals with a consortium of nonprofits and acquired technology that will provide 200 million medical masks a month. The state plans to spend \$990 million in state funds on protective gear, [according to a letter](#) the Department of Finance sent to lawmakers late. California must make a down payment of half that amount— \$495 million — within the next 48 hours. The state is putting together the initial payment with \$188 million in coronavirus funding approved by state lawmakers before they left Sacramento last month, plus \$307 million in funds from a state disaster account. It is not clear yet where the additional \$495 million will come from.

## **NATIONAL**

The COVID-19 outbreak is a rapidly evolving situation and information and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is constantly being updated.

- [Implementing Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19](#)
- [Social Media Toolkit](#)
- [Considerations for Inpatient Obstetric Healthcare Settings](#)
- [CDC's role in helping cruise ship travelers during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Interim Guidelines for Collecting, Handling, and Testing Clinical Specimens from Persons for Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

### **Required FFCRA Documentation & Recordkeeping**

We have written about the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) over the past few weeks in our daily updates and we have detailed the various provisions for emergency paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for reasons related to COVID-19. The US Department of Labor (DOL) had been trying to answer employers' questions before April 1, but one issue that remained unclear was the documentation employers should obtain from employees taking leave under the new law. On April 1, 2020, the same day the FFCRA took effect, the DOL [issued regulations](#) that specifically addressed the issue. On April 6, the Federal Register published the [Rule by the Wage and Hour Division](#). The new FFCRA regulations require employees to provide notice to their employers of their need to take either paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave, and the notice must include the following information:

- Employee's name;
- Date(s) for which leave is requested;
- Qualifying reason for the leave; and

- Oral or written statement that the employee is unable to work because of the qualified reason.

Employees must also provide additional information specific to the qualifying reason for leave including:

- If the employee is subject to a quarantine or isolation order, the name of the government entity that issued the Order;
- If the employee has been advised to self-quarantine due to COVID-19 concerns, the name of the health care provider who advised the employee;
- If the employee is caring for someone else, the employee must provide the name of the government entity that issued the quarantine or isolation order affecting the individual, or the information of the health care provider who advised the individual to self-quarantine; or
- If the employee is taking care of a child whose school is closed or childcare is unavailable due to COVID-19, then the employee must provide the name of the child being cared for, the name of the school, place of care or childcare provider that has closed, and a representation that no other suitable person will be caring for the child during the leave.

The regulation specifies that employers may also request additional materials as needed to support their requests for FFCRA tax credits and tells employers to consult recently released [IRS tax credit guidance](#) for more detail. Currently, the IRS guidance largely mirrors the employee information requirements listed above, not requiring any additional information from employees. But, to obtain the tax credits, the IRS requires some additional information from employers. However, the regulation states that employers may not require the employee's notice include documentation beyond what's allowed by the regulation (the items listed above). For the time being, it appears as though employers cannot require employees to provide notes from health care providers, copies of government orders or school closure notices, or other supplemental documentation, which is different from the DOL's initial guidance on the issue suggesting employees would have to supply those types of documents to substantiate leave. The new regulation requires employers to keep the above documentation for four years, regardless of whether the employee was granted leave or not. Employers should develop a process for collecting the above information from employees and consult with legal counsel before denying leave under the new law. As with all things related to COVID-19, circumstances are fluid; EKA will continue updating everyone on new developments.

## ARTICLES OF INTEREST

### **Race For Vaccine**

Researchers are racing to develop a vaccine for COVID-19 face an even more urgent task in light of recent reports that the virus has rebounded in Asia. New cases of the disease have emerged in Hong Kong, Singapore, and Wuhan, China, in the past week, after governments lifted some of their social distancing controls. To read the full story, click [here](#).

### **Pandemic Puts 5% of Americans Out of Work**

For the second week in a row, 15.7 million Americans filed initial claims for unemployment benefits over the last three weeks the US Department of Labor [reported](#) Thursday, showing a sliver of the economic fallout from the continuing coronavirus pandemic. To read more, click [here](#).

### **San Francisco Passes Emergency Sick Pay Order for Large Businesses**

The San Francisco Board of Supervisors unanimously approved an ordinance requiring companies and nonprofits with 500 or more employees to offer emergency paid sick leave, expanding on a benefit included in the federal stimulus package signed by President Trump. The [citywide Order](#) extends the benefit to workers who weren't covered by the federal Emergency Paid Sick Leave Act, which applies only to small and mid-sized businesses with fewer than 500 employees. To read more, click [here](#).

### **ICE Evaluating Vulnerable Detainees for Possible Release Due to Virus Risk**

Some immigrants held in federal detention facilities could be freed amid the outbreak of COVID-19 in immigration jails across the country as federal officials said they are reviewing cases of people vulnerable to the virus. US Immigration and Customs Enforcement says it has identified 600 "vulnerable" detainees, including people who are over 60 years old and women who are pregnant, that could be released from federal custody. To read more, click [here](#).

### **Coronavirus Risk Assessment Tool**

In the lower-left corner of the UCLA Health chatbot, a new COVID-19 self-check tool was created. If you choose "Coronavirus Risk Assessment" from the available options, you will be prompted to answer several yes/no questions about your symptoms, age and other factors. Based on your responses, the tool will recommend the next steps. To access the new tool, click [here](#).

### **Senate Blocks Dueling Coronavirus Relief Plans**

The Senate yesterday blocked dueling plans to provide hundreds of billions of dollars to help small businesses contend with the coronavirus-fueled economic meltdown amid a stalemate over the scope of the package. To read more, click [here](#).