

Updated February 2022

In April of last year, the Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund (CWEALF) published Know Your Rights in the Workplace: COVID-19 in English & Spanish as a resource to highlight the different programs available to workers in Connecticut during the COVID-19 pandemic. Know Your Rights in the Workplace: COVID-19 | *Quick Facts* relays the ***most up to date information*** based on current federal and state legislation/executive orders. For the latest Connecticut COVID-19 Information [click here](#).

During this time, it's critical that every worker in our state knows their rights in the workplace. If you or someone you know needs assistance, call CWEALF's free [Legal Education Information & Referral line](#): 860-524-0601 or [email](#). ¡Se habla español!

State & Federal Programs Available to Workers in Connecticut

Connecticut Essential Workers Relief Fund

Essential workers who were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic may be eligible to apply for financial relief from the new Connecticut Essential Worker COVID-19 Relief Fund.

The Connecticut Essential Worker COVID-19 Assistance Fund was approved by the Connecticut General Assembly to make \$34 million available in assistance to support the critical workforce that helped keep the state operational during the pandemic. The Connecticut Office of the State Comptroller will oversee the program and has engaged Public Consulting Group to assist with claim processing and payments.

Program benefits are available on a first-come, first-served basis until all funds have been distributed.

You are eligible if:

- You were a resident of Connecticut between March 10, 2020 and July 20, 2021;
- You were employed as an essential worker living in Connecticut between **March 10, 2020 -July 20, 2021;**
- You contracted COVID-19 between March 10, 2020 and July 20, 2021;
- You lost wages due to the inability to work after a COVID-19 diagnosis or related illness;
- You had out-of-pocket medical expenses due to a COVID-19 diagnosis or related illness;
- Your relative/family member was an essential worker who died as a result of COVID-19, after being diagnosed with COVID-19 between March 10, 2020 and July 20, 2021.

To complete your prescreen eligibility and apply for relief [click here](#).

Connecticut Unemployment Insurance

Note: Extended Unemployment Insurance benefits through federal relief programs expired on September 30, 2021. Connecticut's Unemployment Insurance program provides income benefits to workers who are recently unemployed and searching for work.

Weekly Unemployment Insurance payments are calculated by taking the two highest of the four calendar quarters that make up your base period.

- To File for Unemployment Benefits [click here](#).
- To visit Connecticut's Unemployment Website [click here](#).
- To review the Unemployment Claimant Guide [click here](#).

Connecticut's Paid Sick Leave Law

Eligible workers can take paid sick leave to recover from a short-term illness or to care for a sick child or spouse. Those who are eligible can accrue one (1) hour of paid sick leave for every 40 hours worked, and can take a maximum of 40 hours (5 days) of paid sick leave per year. Throughout this leave, workers receive their normal rate of pay. [Click here to learn more](#).

You may be eligible for paid sick leave if:

- You are a service worker that is paid on an hourly basis or are not exempt from minimum wage and overtime requirements;
- You, your spouse or your child up to the age of 18 become sick with a short term illness; or,
- You are seeking preventive care or assistance related to family violence or sexual assault.

Connecticut's Paid Family and Medical Leave Program (PFML)

Connecticut became the eighth state (including Washington D.C.) to pass paid family and medical leave in 2019. Public Act No. 19-25: *An Act Concerning Paid Family and Medical Leave* creates a statewide system of job protected paid leave to workers who need to take time off to care for themselves or a loved one, or welcome a new child. The law also provides up to 12 days of paid time off if you have been impacted by family violence.

Exposure to or testing positive for COVID-19 is not necessarily a qualifying reason to receive income replacement from Connecticut's paid leave program; however, you may be eligible for paid leave benefits if you experience a serious health condition as a result of COVID-19 **and you:**

- Provide medical documentation demonstrating that the exposure to or diagnosis of COVID-19 meets the one or more elements of the definition of serious health condition, in other words, that the COVID-19 results in you having a condition that:
 - Requires an overnight stay in a hospital or other medical care facility; or
 - Incapacitates you or your family member's (for example: unable to work or attend school) for more than three consecutive days and that includes ongoing medical treatment such as multiple appointments with a health care provider, or a single appointment and follow-up care, such as prescription medication; or
 - Results in or exacerbates a chronic conditions that causes occasional periods when the you or your family member is incapacitated, and which require treatment by a health care provider at least twice a year.

How much you will receive while out on leave is dependent on how much you make per week. To estimate your weekly benefit, [click here](#). To prepare to submit a claim, check out the CT Paid Leave Authority's website [here](#) for the step-by-step process and documentation needed for each qualifying reason for leave.

CWEALF leads the Campaign for Paid Family Leave in Connecticut. Learn more: www.paidfamilyleavect.org

Connecticut's Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Workers might also be eligible for unpaid, job protected leave through the Connecticut Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) to recover from longer term illnesses or surgery, to care for an ill loved one with a serious illness, or to welcome a new child. Connecticut's FMLA provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job protected leave in a 12-month period. [Click here to learn more.](#)

You may be eligible for state family and medical leave if:

- You work for an employer who has 1 or more employees;
- You have worked for your employer for at least 12 months;
- You have worked for at least 3 months at your employer;
- You are recovering from a longer term illness or surgery;
- You are caring for an ill loved one with a serious illness; or,
- You are welcoming a new child.

Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Workers who are not eligible for Connecticut's FMLA, might be eligible for the federal program. This is still unpaid, job protected leave that can be used to recover from longer term illnesses or surgery, to care for an ill loved one with a serious illness, or to welcome a new child. Federal FMLA provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job protected leave in a 1 year period. [Click here to learn more.](#)

You may be eligible for federal family and medical leave if:

- You work for an employer who has 75 or more employees;
- You have worked for your employer for at least 12 months;
- You have worked for at least 1,000 hours over a 12 month period with your employer;
- You are recovering from a longer term illness or surgery;
- You are caring for an ill loved one with a serious illness; or,
- You are welcoming a new child.

Families First Coronavirus Relief Act and American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)

The Families First Coronavirus Relief Act and The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) continued the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act II (CARES) passed in 2020. ARPA extended the programs available for unemployed workers in the United States throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. These programs expanded unemployment insurance benefits to workers who lost their jobs as a result of COVID-19. **As of September 30, 2021 these program benefits have expired.**

Additional resources on COVID-19:

- [Frequently Asked Questions on the state of Connecticut's actions related to COVID-19](#)
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: [COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness: [COVID-19 & Homelessness Resource Guide](#)
- Connecticut Department of Social Services: [DSS Response to COVID-19](#)
- Connecticut Fair Housing Center: [COVID-19 Related Fact Sheets & Information](#)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness: [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) Information and Resources](#)
- The Village: [COVID-19 Resources](#)

For general information, contact cwealf@cwealf.org

For legal assistance, contact CWEALF's free Legal Education Information & Referral line:

860-524-0601

or [contact us through email here](#). ¡Se habla español!