



Governor Brad Little

State Capitol :: Boise, Idaho 83720
(208) 334-2100 :: gov.idaho.gov

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Idaho Workforce Development Council
317 W. Main Street
Boise, ID 83735

Dear Members of the Idaho Workforce Development Council,

Thank you to each of you for your efforts to strengthen Idaho's workforce and improve the lives of many Idahoans by helping them achieve meaningful, skilled work. During these difficult and uncertain times, I am doing everything I can to help Idahoans get back to work and get our economy back up to the velocity it had just a few weeks ago.

As we all know, many Idahoans lost jobs because of the COVID-19 pandemic. As we continue to reopen our economy, now is the time to get Idahoans back in the workforce. To help, I recommend the following plan to give cash bonuses to those Idahoans returning to work and request the Council implement it. The plan incentivizes Idahoans to get back to work where they can develop and improve their job skills. It is also designed to assist Idaho employers in recruiting the workforce their businesses and Idaho's economy need to rebound swiftly and robustly.

I recognize the short timeframe available to take advantage of this opportunity and help Idahoans get back to work quickly and before the enhanced unemployment benefits end next month. I am grateful for your willingness to work with me to implement this plan under a tight timeline.

Thank you again for your service to our great state during this difficult and historic time. I look forward to your input and help in implementing this plan.

Sincerely,

Brad Little
Governor of Idaho



RETURN TO WORK BONUS PROGRAM

NEED FOR THE PROGRAM

- Idaho and our nation have seen record unemployment due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The delivery of unemployment benefits has been too slow due to the significant increase in claims.
- As Idaho reopens its economy, employers have reported having trouble getting employees to return to work for various reasons.
- According to a recent study, more than 60 percent of Americans who are out of work as a result of the pandemic earn more with the enhanced unemployment benefits than they do from their normal wages.
- These enhanced benefits are due to expire July 31, emphasizing the need to help unemployed Idahoans get back to work before then.
- It is necessary to provide Idahoans with a financial incentive to return to work to ensure our economic rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic is successful.
- This plan fits well into the Workforce Development Council's charge of assisting employers and employees in developing a ready and skilled workforce.

BENEFITS TO IDAHO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- Assists employers in obtaining a strong workforce to help rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic swiftly and robustly.
- Helps employees obtain meaningful work and develop strong job experience and skills from on-the-job training.
- Helps strengthen Idaho's rebound from the COVID-19 pandemic, creating opportunities for both employers and employees in conjunction with other workforce development initiatives.

ROLE OF THE COUNCIL AND IDAHO STATE TAX COMMISSION

- The Idaho Workforce Development Council will review and finalize the plan, and will assist the Governor's Office with sharing this plan and availability of the bonuses with the public, employers, etc.
- The Idaho State Tax Commission will process the applications from employers and will distribute payments.
- All employer applicants must first establish a secure Taxpayer Access Point (TAP) account to protect their personal and business information on submitted applications.
- Employers must input information on the employees for whom they are seeking a return to work bonus. This is necessary because of the existing relationship between employers and the Tax Commission.



PROPOSED BONUS DETAILS

- Up to \$100 million from the Coronavirus Relief Fund will be made available to workers who have sought unemployment benefits during the coronavirus pandemic—March 1, 2020 through present.
- A one-time bonus will be provided to the worker upon return to the workplace. Awards will be as follows:
 - \$1,500 for full-time work over the 4 weeks following return (minimum 30 hours per week)
 - \$750 for part-time work over the 4 weeks following return (minimum 20 hours per week).
- Funds will be available on a first-come, first-served basis for qualified applicants.
- Information on grant recipients will be reported on Transparent Idaho.

PROPOSED ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Employers can apply for return to work bonuses that will be payable directly to employees who meet the following criteria (much of this criteria is required to comply with the CARES Act):

- The worker has filed for unemployment benefits during the coronavirus pandemics, starting on or after March 1, 2020.
- The worker has started work for a non-governmental employer no later than July 1, 2020.
- The worker makes \$75,000 or less annually.
- The worker meets the part-time (20 hours) or full-time (30 hours) hour thresholds in the four weeks immediately following the return to work.
- The position for which the worker returned to work is intended to be an ongoing position beyond the four-week time period.
- The worker has not previously received a state return to work bonus.