

Maryland's Work Sharing Unemployment Insurance Program Continues to Expand, Protect Jobs

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ANNAPOLIS, Md. - Governor Larry Hogan today announced that 223 businesses have now been approved to participate in the Maryland Department of Labor's [Work Sharing Unemployment Insurance Program](#). As Marylanders continue to navigate challenges related to COVID-19, this program preserves jobs by providing employers with a flexible alternative to layoffs. Employees can be retained at reduced hours while collecting partial unemployment benefits to make up a portion of the lost wages.

"Maryland has regained over 97,000 jobs since we began the safe, gradual, and effective reopening of our economy, and we continue making incredible progress on the road to economic recovery," said Governor Hogan. "The Work Sharing program is truly a game-changer for businesses that are beginning to reopen their doors, and we continue to encourage employers to take advantage of this unique opportunity."

Employers who participate in the Work Sharing program can retain employees by temporarily and equally reducing the hours of work by 20% to 50%, either for their entire business or for select units. By maintaining an experienced staff, they can resume business operations safely and effectively without the challenge of recruiting, hiring, and training employees. Employees reap the benefits of this program by keeping their current job, and often their health and retirement benefits, while receiving partial unemployment insurance benefits to supplement their wages. Employers can apply for the Work Sharing program at <http://www.labor.maryland.gov/employment/worksharing/>.

"As employers across the state take steps to reopen and recover from the economic impact of this public health emergency, we are strongly encouraging employers from all industries to use the Work Sharing program to avoid layoffs, preserve jobs, and gradually transition their skilled workforce back to full time employment in a safe manner," said Labor Secretary Tiffany P. Robinson.

Tulkoff Food Products, Baltimore

Faced with a significant decline in business during the pandemic, Tulkoff Food Products, Inc. was approved to participate in the Work Sharing program in April. Tulkoff is a 90-year-old family owned and operated manufacturer of condiments, sauces, and dressings located in Baltimore City. They supply products for the food service industry in all 50 states and manufacture retail products for national brands.

"When the COVID-19 shutdowns hit in mid-March, the company experienced an 87% decline in its food service business. We immediately cut back everywhere we could to make up for the lost revenue, but it became apparent we needed to reduce payroll. The executive team felt the downturn would reverse, but we had no idea how long it might last and did not want to lose valuable employees," said Phillip Tulkoff, president of Tulkoff Food Products, Inc. "A fellow manufacturing business owner in Maryland sent me information about the Maryland Work Sharing program. Upon investigating the program, it appeared to accomplish all of our goals, retain our current workforce, allow us to reduce payroll from 40 to 32 hours per week, and keep the employees' overall pay close to what they had been making at 40 hours per week. **The program allowed us to save 20% of our hourly payroll for eight weeks until the business picked back up. We are now back to full time for all hourly staff. The program was a perfect solution for our issue.**"

BTE Technologies, Hanover

BTE Technologies is another Work Sharing program participant. BTE is a 41-year-old company based in Maryland that designs, manufactures, and supports high-tech medical devices used in physical therapy, sports medicine, and industrial rehab. BTE's products are proudly made in Maryland and sold throughout the United States and to over 40 countries around the globe.

"Due to the economic challenges created by the coronavirus, BTE was considering aggressive salary actions and furloughs/layoffs. When we heard about Labor's Work Sharing program, we easily applied and were quickly approved in April," said Charles Wetherington, president of BTE Technologies and a member of the Governor's Workforce Development Board. "Thanks to Work Sharing, we reduced these employees' hours from 40 to 30 per week, supplemented their salaries with this program and kept our highly skilled workforce intact. **I will continue to spread the word among the business community about this great program because it is a win-win for both employers and their employees.**"

If you have questions or would like additional information, please email ui.worksharing@maryland.gov.

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