



*Good morning! This COVID-19 email update focuses on information related to unemployment insurance, new recommendations by the CDC, and a remote work training opportunity. Look for our normal Tuesday e-newsletter and another COVID-19 update from us later this week. Note that our office will be closed on Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>. Our staff will resume work remotely on Monday, April 13<sup>th</sup>.*

### **Free Webinar – Roundtable on Remote Work**

Did you miss our live roundtable event on best practices for remote work? Watch [this video](#) today to learn tips and get advice on remote work from Hibbing Area Chamber staff and some of our members! This informational video will be helpful for those who are remote work veterans as well as those who are new to remote work!

### **Updates on Unemployment Insurance (UI)**

#### ***New Customer Service Schedule***

Due to the high volume of phone calls that are being received related to UI, the Dept. of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) requests that all UI applicants follow a [new schedule](#) to receive customer service by phone. Applications are still available online [based on the last digit of your social security number](#). File Online at [www.uimn.org](http://www.uimn.org) to help keep phone lines open for those who need it.

#### **New UI Customer Service Phone Schedule**

- If you have a question about your account, call Monday - Thursday, between 8 am - 2 pm.
- If you need help applying for unemployment benefits, call Friday between 8 am - 4:30 pm.
- If you need help with your password, call anytime during business hours.

#### ***UI Guidance for Self-Employed and Contract Workers***

DEED is waiting on specific federal guidance before it can pay out unemployment claims for independent contractors and self-employed individuals. It may be another few weeks before these types of claims can be paid, but your benefits should be backdated to the date of application or date of impact from COVID-19. Self-employed and contract workers should [apply now](#) for UI benefits. Your claim may be denied at this time, but DEED will be proactively reaching out to all independent contractor/self-employed applicants once the federal guidance on payments is received.

For detailed instructions on how to apply for self-employed and contract workers, [click here](#). Tune into our [Facebook Page](#) on Tuesday at noon for a live video discussing UI for Independent Contractors and Self-Employed Individuals.

#### ***New CDC Guidelines on Fabric Masks and COVID-19***

The CDC has issued [new guidelines](#) on cloth face coverings (masks) for the public during the COVID-19 pandemic. CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g. grocery stores and pharmacies). CDC still recommends that you stay at least 6 feet away from other people (social distancing), frequent hand cleaning and other everyday preventive actions. Cloth face coverings fashioned from household items or made at home from common materials at low cost can be used as an additional, voluntary public health measure. Instructions on sew/no-sew options and tips on how to most effectively wear a mask can be found [here](#).

#### ***Paycheck Protection Program Applications Open***

Applications opened on Friday for the Paycheck Protection (PPP) forgivable loan program for small businesses and sole proprietorships. On April 10<sup>th</sup>, applications will open for independent contractors and self-employed individuals. [Contact your local lender](#) to see if they are participating in the program and can help process your loan application. The Treasury has created multiple documents on its [CARES Act webpage](#) that address frequently asked questions about the Paycheck Protection Program. [Click here](#) for a direct link to the FAQ for businesses who are considering applying for the PPP. Funds for this program are limited, so you should apply as soon as possible. It may take some time for your lender to process the high volume of applications expected for this program.