

Washington Employment Security Department

January 2023 | Issue 30

# WA CARES: IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE AND NEW EMPLOYEE EXEMPTIONS



November 21, 2022



## Premium collection begins in July (Q3)

Worker contributions to the WA Cares Fund, the state's new long-term care insurance program, start this summer. Beginning July 1, 2023, you must collect WA Cares premiums from your employees' wages and report their wages and hours at the end of each quarter—the same way you do now for Paid Leave. Reporting will begin October 2023 and will follow the same payment process as Paid Leave. As an employer, you won't pay any share of WA Cares premiums for your employees.

## Previously approved exemptions are still valid

Workers who had private long-term care insurance on or before Nov. 1, 2021, were able to apply to ESD for an exemption from the WA Cares Fund until Dec. 31, 2022. Under current law, these exemptions are permanent; employees who have received an approved exemption will not be able to re-enroll in the program.

If your employees previously applied for a private insurance exemption and received an approval letter from ESD, their exemption is still valid. They do not need to re-apply.

You should keep their exemption letters on file. Employees who can't find their exemption letter can download a copy from the Secure Access Washington account they used to apply for the exemption.

## Previously approved exemptions are still valid

Beginning January 1, 2023, Washington workers became eligible for exemptions from WA Cares if any of the following apply to them:

- They live outside of Washington.
- They are the spouse or registered domestic partner of an active-duty service member of the U.S. armed forces.
- They have non-immigrant work visas.
- They are veterans with a 70% service-connected disability rating or higher.

Workers will qualify for these exemptions only as long as these circumstances apply. If workers no longer qualify for their exemption, they will be required to notify ESD and their employer within 90 days. **Exception:** *Veterans with a 70% service-connected disability rating or higher will receive a permanent exemption.*





## Tracking employee exemptions

Some employees may choose to apply for an exemption from WA Cares coverage. It's their responsibility to apply and—if approved—to notify you and give you a copy of their approval letter from ESD.

### Once notified, you must:

- Not deduct WA Cares premiums from employees who've provided an ESD exemption approval letter. Note: this letter will list the date on which the employee's exemption takes effect.
- Keep a copy of your employees' approval letters on file.

It is the employee's responsibility to notify you of any changes to their exemption status. Failure to do so can result in required back-payment of premiums and additional penalties.

[Learn more about WA Cares exemptions.](#)



## Employer resources

WA Cares resources for businesses are available online in the [employer toolkit](#). Additional toolkit materials are in progress and will be published later this month.

To stay up to date on new developments and materials, sign up for the [WA Cares mailing list](#).

## Upcoming WA Cares basics webinar



Join the WA Cares Fund team for a webinar on WA Cares Basics: What Workers Need to Know on January 18, 2023, from 12 PM to 1 PM Pacific Time. We'll cover the basics of long-term care, how WA Cares works and provide an opportunity for audience Q&A. Live captioning and ASL interpretation will be available.

[Learn more and register.](#)





VOLUNTARY BENEFITS ASSOCIATION\*

Voluntary Benefits Association, Inc. a 501(c)(3) non-profit trade association

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,  
CONTACT US AT:**

WWW.VBASSOCIATION.COM  
EMAIL: INFO@VBASSOCIATION.COM  
(856) 405-3003