



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
**DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**  
**OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY**  
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June 17, 2020

**TO:** All DOC Staff

**FROM:**   
Stephen Sinclair, Secretary

**SUBJECT: Governor announces cancellation of some state employee raises and need for furloughs**

Earlier today, Gov. Jay Inslee sent a news release announcing his decision to direct all state agencies under his authority to cancel the 3% general wage increase for many employees and to begin furloughs for most state employees.

The decision comes as the state faces a severe downturn in revenue collections due to the COVID-19 public health crisis.

**Salary increases cancelled for exempt employees earning over \$53,000**

Most union-represented and non-represented classified employees will still receive the general wage increase July 1 as approved by the Legislature last year. But under Inslee's directive, agency directors, Exempt Management Service and Washington Management Service employees, and all other exempt employees who earn more than \$53,000 annually will not.

**Furloughs starting no later than June 28**

In addition to cancelling pay raises, starting no later than June 28, Inslee is requiring more than 40,000 state employees to take one furlough day per week through July 25. After July, employees will be required to take one furlough day per month at least through the fall. Employees will also be allowed to take voluntary unpaid furloughs.

The furlough plan exempts those in critical positions for which the state would have to bring in relief help to cover for a furloughed employee. Corrections is working to identify those employees who are required to take the furlough and those who are not. We will send follow-up information as soon as possible.

**Potential relief through ESD's Shared Work program**

The Department of Corrections will be joining other state agencies in seeking an approved plan under the [SharedWork program](#) with Employment Security Department to provide

some financial support for furloughed employees. If approved, furloughed employees would potentially be allowed to apply for unemployment and the \$600 pandemic unemployment benefit available to unemployed workers to help them with the financial impact of the weekly furloughs through July 25. Employees will be required to register for a [SAW account](#). Then, if we are approved as a SharedWork employer, employees will need to apply for [unemployment](#). Employees will then need to file weekly claims each week to receive their benefits. We will provide more information as it becomes available.

**State to save millions, potentially avoiding other more drastic actions**

The two actions — cancelling the general wage increase and instituting furloughs through November — together will save the state Near General Fund about \$55 million over the next year, according to preliminary estimates.

The governor urged other agencies not under his authority — including higher education institutions, the Legislature, courts and separately elected officials — to adopt similar measures. If they do, the state would save another estimated \$91 million.

**Other actions**

Today's directive comes on top of earlier actions by the governor and his budget office to begin reducing spending wherever possible in the current two-year budget.

As noted in my message to you on May 13 re: the [Governor's Directive 20-05](#), the governor previously directed cabinet agencies to freeze hiring, personal services contracts and equipment purchases. The Office of Financial Management also directed agencies to identify [options to reduce fiscal year 2021 spending](#) by about 15%. As I noted in my [Thank You](#) video message to you on June 8, those options may change but we had to present them as part of the budget exercise.

**More information to come**

All state agencies are working together with OFM to provide additional resources to share with you all regarding the effects of this decision. We will provide more information as soon as possible.

This news comes at a time when we are all working harder and longer than ever. Please know how much I appreciate you all. Thank you for your commitment to our agency and the people we serve.

SS:jg