

Colleagues,

Federal and State authorities are seeing an increasing number of identity thefts and fraudulent unemployment benefits claims occurring nationwide during the response to COVID-19. The City of Seattle and some of its employees have also been affected by this criminal activity. Know that the City takes data security very seriously, especially with respect to employee data, and we have many security protocols in place to manage this situation. We are sharing this information with you so you are aware that this fraudulent activity exists, and to provide information on steps you can take to minimize the risk of identity theft and respond to and recover from it if it does happen to you.

Some City employees have already been impacted by this nationwide increase in fraudulent unemployment benefit claims. If this happens to you, your department's Human Resources representative will email you to notify you that they have received a request for employment information with the City due to an unemployment claim filed with the WA State Employment Security Department (ESD).

If you receive this notice, there are immediate actions that we need you to take.

1. **Reply to the email** and convey whether you did or did not file a claim; **AND**
2. **If the claim is fraudulent, [notify ESD](#)** and state that a fraudulent claim was made on your behalf.

**Steps You Can Take to minimize your risk:**

There are also steps you can take to minimize your risk of being an identity theft victim.

1. Visit the [ESD website from a secure device](#) and create an online account if you don't already have one. You do not need to take any action beyond this; simply creating an account with your social security number (SSN) will ensure no one else can make a fraudulent claim with your SSN.
2. If you find that an account has already been created with your SSN, it may be an indication that your SSN has been compromised in a fraudulent claim.
3. If you need to report a fraudulent claim contact the [ESD fraud unit](#), and also report it to your local police department.
4. Additional steps you can take to protect your personal information, and respond to and recover from identity theft are included on the [Federal Trade Commission website](#) in their identity theft [recovery plan](#).

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact [SHR\\_Unemployment\\_Fraud@seattle.gov](mailto:SHR_Unemployment_Fraud@seattle.gov) or your [HR department](#). We are here for you as we respond to COVID-19 together.

We understand that this may be a stressful time. Remember that the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to you 24/7 for counseling, health, wellness and other resources.

Stay safe,

Bobby Humes  
Director  
Seattle Department of Human Resources