

Evers administration still reviewing Trump's order on federal unemployment payments

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Gov. Tony Evers says his administration is still reviewing the president's executive actions allowing an additional \$400 in weekly unemployment payments.

Initially, Trump said the federal government would pick up \$300 if states would pay \$100 of the additional benefit. After some state officials complained they didn't have the resources, White House adviser Larry Kudlow said states wouldn't have to pay anything for their unemployed workers to get the \$300 in federal money.

The U.S. Department of Labor on Wednesday then provided advice to states that they may meet the \$100-per-week requirement with the regular payments they make through their unemployment funds. But unemployed workers that use that option would see \$300, not the \$400 the president originally discussed.

Evers told reporters on a web call the "story has changed somewhat" on how the additional money would work.

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It also comes as the state has continued to struggle with a backlog of unresolved unemployment cases that has resulted in some laid-off workers waiting months for payments.

"Our goal is to make sure that people that are unemployed get the money they need to survive, that's the bottom line," Evers said. He noted with the urgency of the situation that it "would compel people to come together in DC and actually pass a bill."

The federal government had been providing an additional \$600 a week on top of state payments. Extending those payments was one of the issues at the heart of the breakdown in negotiations over a new COVID-19 bill.

U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Oshkosh, has been critical of the additional \$600 payments, arguing they created a disincentive for some to return to work. He offered a proposal during negotiations of giving the states the option of providing an additional \$200 per week on top of their benefits or a combined payment equal to two-thirds of laid-off workers normal wages with a cap of \$500.

Also, Johnson said last week he hopes the negotiations between House Dems and the White House “remain broken down” due to the amount of spending by the federal government during the pandemic.

Johnson yesterday [urged Evers over Twitter](#) to accept the additional \$400 a week “by simply saying yes to @realdonaldtrump’s executive order,” adding his office was ready to help.

Evers yesterday also identified testing and contact tracing as two priorities for CARES Act money the state has yet to allocate.

The Legislative Fiscal Bureau earlier this week identified nearly \$1.8 billion the state has allocated from the federal aid it received to address COVID-19 costs. That left about \$243.7 million that hadn’t been designated yet.

Today, the Evers administration unveiled a dashboard so the public can track how the state has spent the money. It comes as some Republicans have raised questions following a U.S. Treasury report that showed a fraction of the money had been spent by June 30. The Evers administration has said that summary didn’t account for some money released after July 1 as well as the designations identified for the funds.

Evers said not all of the money has been allocated yet so the state has flexibility to deal with some costs. He anticipated testing and contact tracing to go through year’s end and “ratchet up as we move forward.”

“It costs money, and we will do everything in our power to make sure that we continue to do that. That is the overall first priority,” Evers said.

See more on the dashboard [here](#).