

Opportunity Wisconsin: New data shows Wisconsinites still face steep unemployment, as pandemic unemployment assistance expires in days

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MADISON, Wis. — Yesterday, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) [released](#) new data that reveals Wisconsinites are still grappling with devastating unemployment and layoffs nearly five months into the coronavirus pandemic. As of this week, more than 25,000 Wisconsinites have filed for unemployment since March and the most recent rate of unemployment in Wisconsin remains a staggering 8.5 percent.

Two months ago, Opportunity Wisconsin [unveiled a new website](#) to share updated and aggregated job data from across the state. The site has been updated to reflect today's new monthly jobs numbers and offers data visualizations of the economic pain lingering across the state.

[Check out the Opportunity Wisconsin Layoffs Tracker here.](#)

These numbers do not even fully reflect the damage that has been done to workers, small businesses, and the economy during this pandemic. While President Trump insists on more tax cuts for the wealthy and well-connected, as recently as [yesterday](#), Wisconsinites continue to pay the price for Trump's billionaires-first policymaking.

"I was lost, confused, and angry when I found out that I was being laid off due to the pandemic. I didn't know where my next check was coming from, or how was I going

to pay my rent. My life was up in the air,” said Shamar Cannon, a former security guard in Milwaukee. “I had no savings, I lived check to check working as a security guard. There were no guarantees, and I didn’t know when, if ever, I would return to work. I was in a living hell, not able to pay my rent, buy food, or support myself.”

The impending expiration of the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance benefits in one week will only exacerbate the crisis, as nearly 700,000 Wisconsinites will soon receive a \$2,400/month pay cut. Even if the Trump and Senate Republicans commit to some form of continued unemployment assistance next month, they have firmly stated it will be a mere fraction of the paycheck helping millions stay afloat right now. If President Trump and the Republican-controlled Senate allow these benefits to expire or slash them to pennies, they will deliver yet another pay cut to Wisconsinites who have already been hit the hardest.

Under such dire circumstances, Wisconsinites need the president to put us and our communities first by extending pandemic unemployment assistance. President Trump cannot continue to put the whims of Wall Street over Wisconsin families.