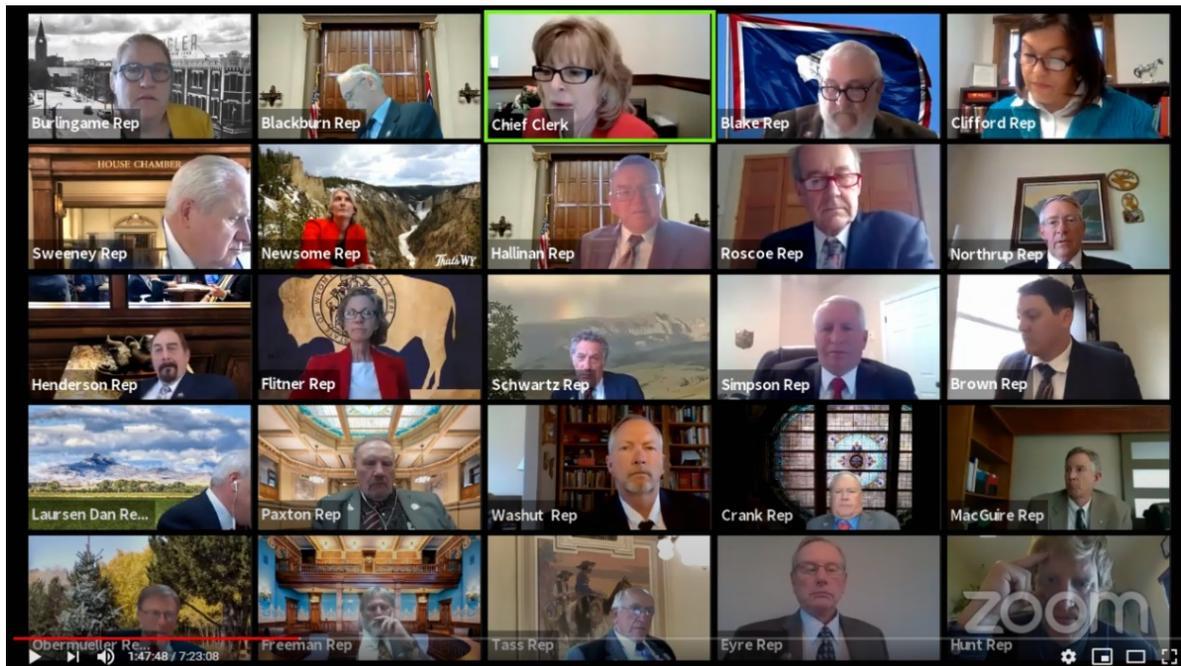




2020 Special Session May 15-16



The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided the State government of Wyoming with one billion two hundred fifty million dollars (\$1,250,000,000) for costs that are necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health emergency with respect to COVID19.

Governor Mark Gordon convened a special (virtual) session of the Wyoming Legislature to appropriate the CARES Act funds and respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lawmakers met on May 15-16 and spent two full days discussing four mirrored bills. A summary of each bill can be found below.

Visit [Lawmakers begin appropriating federal aid money](#) to learn more.

WHY IT MATTERS: For many Wyoming Women, achieving or maintaining economic self-sufficiency will be much more difficult as they continue to face layoffs, school closures, expiration of federal renter protections and the numerous other **impacts of COVID-19**.

WYWF will continue to keep you informed of legislative activity in the interim related to women's economic self-sufficiency.

Visit wyoleg.gov to access:
[Governor Gordon's full message to the Wyoming Legislature](#)
[Archived footage of the Special Session](#)
[Special Session Legislation](#)

[Special Session FAQs](#)

Senate Files & House Bills

Emergency appropriation - COVID-19 funds - [SF1001](#) & mirrored bill [HB1001](#)

Sponsored by: Management Council

This bill provides legislative findings that establish four (4) categorical areas the Legislature intends the State to address and fund, to the extent allowable, as part of the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts. The bill appropriates the CARES Act funds, as well as other discretionary funds received from future similarly purposed federal legislation, to the Office of the Governor for broad categories of expenditures authorized by the Legislature. The bill reserves to the Legislature the authority to further review and appropriate these funds. Absent further legislation, the bill releases the appropriation in three funding phases. [Click here for full summary](#)

ELEMENTS THAT MAY BENEFIT WOMEN:

- Grants to Wyoming health care providers, rural health care districts, hospital districts, and health care facilities to respond to the public health emergency and to improve the State's health care delivery system and infrastructure.
- Operational or capital construction expenses at any hospital or other health care facility that is operated by a governmental entity, including the Wyoming Life Resource Center and the Wyoming State Hospital.
- Capital construction expenses to improve the State's emergency health care capacity to provide mental health services.
- Expenses to address food insecurity.

LAST ACTION:

Passed into law

[COVID Emergency aid and emergency procedures - SF1002](#) & mirrored bill [HB1002](#)

Sponsored by: Management Council

This bill relates to:

- Emergency aid and emergency procedures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Clarifying business immunity from civil liability;
- Amending unemployment benefits;
- Authorizing agreements with the federal gov and the expenditure of federal funds;
- Creating programs to avoid the eviction of needy persons;
- Amending the unemployment compensation program;
- Amending the worker's compensation program;
- Providing additional authority to the governor;
- Providing for a worker's compensation premium credit;
- Amending a prior worker's compensation premium credit

[Click here for full summary](#)

ELEMENTS THAT MAY BENEFIT WOMEN:

- The bill appropriated \$15,000,000.00 to establish two housing assistance programs by the Wyoming Community Development Authority (WCDA).

Option 1: landlord providing a home to a residential tenant can apply for benefits if they are losing at least 25% of rent payments, the tenant is unable to pay rent and the

tenant's job has been impacted by COVID-19. The landlord cannot evict the tenant or charge additional rent while participating in the program.

Option 2: provides rent, security deposit, mortgage payment and hazard insurance assistance to those impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Under this program, the WCDA must establish eligibility income thresholds and mandatory copayment obligations and benefits received from other programs must be deducted from any program benefits.

- The bill authorizes the Department of Workforce Services and the Governor to enter into an agreement with the federal Department of Labor for a temporary short-time compensation program (workshare program). Short-time compensation programs provide benefits to employers who reduce their workforce hours but do not lay-off or terminate employees

LAST ACTION:

Each chamber passed its version of SF-1002 — the Senate’s with the adjusted version of bill 1005 added as a business immunity amendment, the House’s without — sending it to a joint conference committee for negotiations. The joint conference committee was majority female and comprised of Representatives Cathy Connolly, Sue Wilson and Eric Barlow as well as Senators Tara Nethercott, Lissa Anselmi-Dalton and Ogden Driskill.

The Legislature ultimately passed a delicate compromise crafted by Senator Tara Nethercott (R-Cheyenne) and Representative Cathy Connolly (D-Laramie).

Emergency budgeting - COVID-19 - HB1003 & SF1003

Sponsored by: Management Council

This bill relates to:

- budgeting for the expenses of government;
- temporarily amending the computation of school district operating balances and cash reserves;
- providing for carryover and reappropriation of certain funds as specified

LAST ACTION:

Failed in the House by a vote of 7-52-1-0-0 and then failed to advance to the Senate Due to the mirror bill process.

HB1004 - COVID-19 business relief programs

Sponsored by: Joint Minerals, Business & Economic Development Interim Committee

This bill relates to:

- authorizing emergency governmental programs related to economic development and business relief as specified

[Click here for full summary](#)

ELEMENTS THAT MAY BENEFIT WOMEN:

- Women owned businesses may benefit from the creation of three (3) programs designed to provide financial relief to Wyoming businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the state and local orders that closed businesses or resulted in business interruptions.

The Wyoming Business Interruption Stipend - \$50 million in grants of up to \$50,000 to

independent Wyoming businesses that employ fewer than 50 people.

The Coronavirus Business Relief Stipend - \$225 million in grants of up to \$300,000 for independent Wyoming businesses that employ fewer than 100 people. The Legislature set aside \$50 million of this funding for businesses explicitly closed because of state orders.

The Coronavirus Mitigation Stipend - \$50 million for reimbursement of up to \$500,000 in expenses incurred for the health and safety of Wyoming employees and to comply with public health guidelines because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

LAST ACTION:
Passed into law

Coronavirus immunity provisions - [HB1005](#) & [SF1005](#)

Sponsored by: Senator(s) Kinsley, Agar, Anselmi-Dalton, Biteman, Boner, Dockstader, Driskill, Hicks, Kost, Moniz and Steinmetz and Representative(s) Clausen, Jennings, Lindholm, Pownall, Salazar, Tass and Western

The bill relates to:

- providing immunity from civil liability for damages and injuries resulting from exposure to coronaviruses as specified

LAST ACTION:

Not considered in the House, failed mirror bill process.

An adjusted version of the bill was added as an amendment to [Senate File 1002 – Emergency powers-COVID-19](#).

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[About the Wyoming Women's Foundation](#)

The Wyoming Women's Foundation is a priority fund of the [Wyoming Community Foundation](#), which granted out over \$11 million to nonprofits across the state in 2019, and over \$85 million since its inception in 1989. The Women's Foundation builds on a permanent endowment that will ensure funding to enhance the lives of women and girls in Wyoming for generations to come. It makes grants to organizations that help Wyoming women and girls attain economic self-sufficiency, creates statewide awareness of the barriers to economic self-sufficiency, and supports systems change to eliminate those barriers. Learn more at wywf.org.

To learn more about WYWF visit us at WYWF.org, on Facebook [@WYWomensFoundation](#) or on Instagram [@WyoWomen](#).

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