

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Unemployment Compensation

(adapted from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) Website

(<http://jfs.ohio.gov/ouio/CoronavirusAndUI.stm>)

An executive order issued by Governor DeWine expands flexibility for Ohioans to receive unemployment benefits during Ohio's emergency declaration period. In addition, the waiting period (one-week) for eligible Ohioans to receive unemployment benefits will be waived. Furthermore, the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides for an additional 13 weeks of Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation benefits (through December 26, 2020 in accordance with the law and the ODJFS pay week), as well as an additional \$600 per week for all employees receiving state unemployment compensation (through July 25, 2020 in accordance with the law and the ODJFS pay week).

1. Will I be eligible for unemployment benefits?
 - a. Individuals must have at least 20 weeks of employment and an average weekly wage of \$269 during the base period of the claim. The 'base period' is the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters at the time the claim is filed. (Claims filed after April 4th would be calculated on the four quarters beginning January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019. For a detailed explanation of the base period, see pages 14-16 of the Worker's Guide to Unemployment Insurance on the ODJFS website: <http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/num/JFS55213/pdf/>).
2. How much can I expect to receive in benefits if my application is approved?
 - a. The weekly benefit amount is typically half the claimant's previous wages up to a set maximum (range of \$480-\$647 per week depending on qualified dependents claimed). For more detailed information, see page 19 of the Worker's Guide to Unemployment Insurance on the ODJFS website: <http://www.odjfs.state.oh.us/forms/num/JFS55213/pdf/>. Additionally, if you receive any amount of state unemployment benefits, you will be eligible to receive an additional \$600 per week under the federal CARES Act.
3. When will I know if I will receive unemployment benefits? When could I receive my first payment?
 - a. ODJFS is working as quickly as possible to process a record number of claims. Once your application has been processed, you will receive a determination. The determination will state whether you qualify for benefits. If you qualify, and if you choose direct deposit, your first payment will be deposited into your account within a few business days. If you choose debit card, it will take a few days longer. All benefits will be retroactive to the date you first qualified. Remember that to receive payments, you also must file weekly claims.
4. Am I required to search for work or conduct reemployment activities during the pandemic?
 - a. No, during this emergency, the requirement that claimants actively search for work each week that they receive benefits has been waived. However, claimants still must be "able and available for work." *Additionally, you will continue to be actively employed with Wright State University.*
5. If my employer continues to provide health insurance, will it impact my benefits?
 - a. No.

6. How long can I receive benefits? Could unemployment be offered indefinitely through this crisis?
 - a. Claimants may receive up to 26 weeks of benefits a year. Currently, there is no extension of benefits in place.
7. How do I apply for unemployment insurance benefits?
 - a. Ohio has two ways to apply:
 - i. Online – You can file online at <http://unemployment.ohio.gov/> 24 hours/day, 7 days a week. Note that ODJFS is experiencing slow processing times due to high claims activity.
 - ii. Telephone – You can call (toll-free) 1-877-644-6562 or TTY 1-614-387-8408. ODJFS currently has EXTENDED CALL CENTER HOURS: Agents are available to assist with PIN resets and take initial applications Monday through Friday 7 AM - 7 PM, Saturday 9 AM - 5 PM, and Sunday 9 AM - 1 PM.
8. Can I file my application on my mobile device?
 - a. Yes, you can use the web browser on your mobile device to apply online. Please use caution when entering information to make sure that what you type is accurate, including your Social Security number and bank account number.
9. What is being done for potentially qualified individuals who still cannot access unemployment? Wait times on phone calls are lengthy and the website is occasionally not working as expected, and people are being denied automatically.
 - a. ODJFS apologizes for any difficulties. The high claims volume has slowed processing times, but their unemployment team is working hard to process claims and distribute payments as quickly as possible. They are adding more customer service representatives and have expanded call center hours as mentioned above. In addition, all benefits will be retroactive to the date claimants became eligible.
10. My driver's license is expired, and I can't renew it because the BMV is shut down. Can I still file for unemployment?
 - a. Yes. Please enter the expired driver's license number in the required field. At this time, no claim will be stopped as a result of an expired license.
11. What do I need to apply for Unemployment Insurance Benefits?
 - a. You will need:
 - i. Your Social Security number
 - ii. Your driver's license or state ID number
 - iii. Your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address
 - iv. Name, address, telephone number, and dates of employment with each employer you worked for during the past 6 weeks of employment
 - v. The reason you became unemployed from each employer
 1. For this situation, you will list the number dedicated to the COVID-19 pandemic **2000180**
 - vi. Dependents' names, Social Security numbers, and dates of birth
 1. If claiming dependents, your spouse's name, Social Security number, and birth date
 - vii. If you are not a U.S. citizen or national, alien registration number and expiration date

- viii. Your regular occupation and job skills
 - b. Also, if you had out-of-state employment, have worked for the federal government, or are separated from military service, more information is required, including Form DD-214, member 4 copy (for military service) and/or the SF-8 or SF-50 form (for federal government employment).
12. My benefits were previously exhausted. What do I do?
- a. You may qualify for an additional 13 weeks of Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation benefits under the, CARES Act which was signed into law on March 27. The benefit amount will be similar to traditional unemployment benefits, plus an additional \$600. Necessary system programming to enable these benefits is underway. Benefits will be retroactive to the date claimants became eligible.