

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF JOBS AND FAMILY SERVICES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

UPDATED APRIL 16, 2020

Questions and Answers

Question 1:

How do I apply for unemployment insurance benefits?

Answer:

Ohio has two ways to apply:

- Online
File online unemployment.ohio.gov 24 hours/day, 7 days a week. Note that we are experiencing slow processing times due to high claims activity.
- Telephone
Call toll-free 1-877-644-6562 or TTY 1-614-387-8408.
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.

For any other calls, regular business hours are: Monday through Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM.

It is not possible to apply for unemployment benefits in person.

Question 2: I filed my claim before the mass-layoff number was made public. What do I need to do now?

Answer: If you filed before receiving the number, no need to worry. Your claim will still be processed, and your benefits will not be delayed. Please do not attempt to adjust your application.

Question 3: I was laid off by my employer due to COVID-19 and given a group number to file under. My benefits were previously exhausted, and I have no option to be able to file. I qualify according to the guidelines of your bill. What do I do?

Answer: You may qualify for an additional 13 weeks of Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation benefits under the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (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.

Question 4:What are the guidelines for entering bank account information in my online application?

Answer: Use numbers only when entering the account and routing number. Do not enter special characters or letters. Also, do not copy and paste the account or routing number.

Question 5:How do I reset my PIN number?

Answer: If your PIN is not working or if you have been locked out, you must speak with an ODJFS staff member to verify your identity and request a new temporary PIN. Please call 1-866-962-4064 for assistance. Staff are available 7 AM - 7 PM weekdays, 9 AM to 5 PM on Saturdays, and 9 AM - 1 PM on Sundays. To find the phone number of your processing center, visit jfs.ohio.gov/ouio/claims-processing-center-locations.stm.

Question 6:I tried to reset my PIN online and got an error message. What should I do?

Answer: Our apologies for that. You will need to either speak to an agent or else get help via the website's chat feature. Call center hours have been extended to Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The number is 877-644-6562.

Question 7:Why did I receive a request to complete a Claimant Monetary Affidavit and provide proof of wages?

Answer: Claimant Affidavits are used when additional information is needed regarding the number of weeks you worked or the amount of wages you earned. It is important that you review the affidavit carefully and send the requested information as soon as possible. If you dispute the weeks and wages reported by your employer – or if you add missing weeks, wages, or employers to Item 2 on the affidavit – you must include proof of weeks/wages with your response.

Please do not return the form if you do not have additions or corrections. Email the completed affidavit and documentation to UI_Respond@jfs.ohio.gov. You also could fax it to the number listed on the form.

Question 8:Can I file my application on my mobile device?

Answer: 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.

Question 9:I am receiving a message that I am unable to file a claim until Sunday. Why would I be unable to file a claim?

Answer: Once you file your application for unemployment, you cannot claim a week of benefits until the week has ended on Saturday at midnight. Instructions for claiming your first week are included on the New Claim Instruction Sheet, which all claimants receive after their applications are processed.

Question 10:It looks like I have a new correspondence in my account. Why can't I open it?

Answer: *Updated:* You may see correspondence in your account before they are actually available to view. Typically, you will be able to view them once you receive an

email notification that the correspondence is available. However, the high claims volume has caused delays in correspondence processing, and our system generated email notifications before correspondence was available to view. If you received an email on March 27 or before notifying you of a new correspondence, that correspondence might not be available yet. If you receive an email on March 28 or later, that correspondence is ready to view.

Question 11: Will workers qualify for unemployment benefits if the coronavirus (COVID-19) causes an employer to shut down operations?

Answer: Updated: An executive order issued by Governor DeWine expands flexibility for Ohioans to receive unemployment benefits during Ohio's emergency declaration period. Unemployment benefits will be available for eligible individuals who are requested by a medical professional, local health authority, or employer to be isolated or quarantined as a consequence of COVID-19, even if they are not actually diagnosed with COVID-19. In addition, the waiting period for eligible Ohioans to receive unemployment benefits will be waived.

Question 12: If an employer lays off employees due to the loss of production caused by the coronavirus, will the employees be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits?

Answer: Yes, if the employees are otherwise eligible. An executive order issued by Governor DeWine expands flexibility for Ohioans to receive unemployment benefits during Ohio's emergency declaration period.

Question 13: Are self-employed individuals and contractors eligible for unemployment benefits?

Answer: Updated: Currently, self-employed individuals and 1099 contractors are not eligible for unemployment benefits. However, the new federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) program will provide up to 39 weeks of benefits to self-employed workers, 1099 tax filers, and some other individuals who previously were not eligible for unemployment benefits. The benefit amount will be similar to traditional unemployment benefits, plus an additional \$600. The program's effective date is Jan. 27 through Dec. 31.

This is a new program, which we look forward to implementing. Like other states, Ohio is waiting for further guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor on how to operationalize it. Once it is up and running, retroactive benefits will be provided. We will share more information as soon as we have it.

Question 14: Will child care workers be compensated if those close?

Answer: Individuals who are laid off because of a COVID-19-related business closure may be eligible for benefits. Some child care facilities may be affiliated with churches or other organizations that are not required by law to pay unemployment insurance taxes. In those cases, the individual may not be in "covered employment" and may not be able to establish a valid claim.

Question 15: I am a manager at a hair salon and fortunately have signed up for unemployment but some of my girls don't meet the \$269 per week qualification. What are their other options?

Answer: The federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which was signed into law on March 27, creates a new program that provides benefits to individuals who historically have not qualified for unemployment compensation. The Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program authorizes benefits for individuals who have been partially or totally unemployed due to COVID-19. The benefit amount will be similar to traditional unemployment benefits, plus an additional \$600. This new program is being built. Once it is up and running, benefits for eligible individuals will be retroactive to Jan. 27, for a period of up to 39 weeks.

Question 16: If you are working carryover/fewer hours, can you apply?

Answer: Individuals who are partially unemployed due to lack of work may be eligible for benefits. Any earnings from employment during the week claimed may reduce the amount of benefits paid. Earnings equal to or less than 20% of the claimant's weekly benefit amount will not reduce the amount of benefits paid. Earnings over 20% of the weekly benefit amount will reduce the benefit payment dollar for dollar. Earnings equal to or over the benefit amount will result in no benefits for that week.

Question 17: My business has many part-time temporary employees now working zero hours. Are they eligible for unemployment?

Answer: It's possible, if they had at least 20 weeks of employment and earned an average weekly wage of \$269 during the base period of the claim. See Question 8 for the definition of a base period.

Question 18: If you have two jobs and you've lost one of them, are you eligible for unemployment?

Answer: Unemployment compensation is designed to be a partial replacement of earnings rather than a total compensation for lost wages. An individual may be considered partially unemployed due to the loss of one job, but eligibility for payments will be dependent on earnings for each week of benefits claimed. If earnings for the week are 20% or less of the claimant's weekly benefit amount, then the full weekly amount may be payable. Earnings over 20% of the weekly benefit amount will reduce the payment dollar for dollar. If the weekly earnings are equal to or greater than the weekly benefit amount, then no benefit will be payable.

Question 19: If an employee is in mandatory quarantine because of suspicion of having the coronavirus, will they be eligible for unemployment benefits?

Answer: *Updated:* Yes, an executive order issued by Governor DeWine states that employees who are quarantined are considered to be unemployed.

Question 20: If an asymptomatic employee imposes a self-quarantine because of the coronavirus, will they be eligible for unemployment benefits?

Answer: In most cases, no. Unemployment benefits are available to individuals who are totally or partially unemployed due to no fault of their own. In this example, the individual-not the employer-is choosing not to work and, therefore, would be ineligible. However, the facts of each circumstance are important. If the employer allowed this individual to telework, they would not qualify for benefits because they would not be unemployed. If the employer required the individual to stay home but did not offer telework, the individual might be eligible for benefits if they met the monetary and weekly eligibility criteria.

Question 21:Can you receive unemployment benefits if you are taking care of a sick relative or loved one?

Answer: At this time, no. If asymptomatic individuals remove themselves from employment – as opposed to an employer or medical professional removing them from employment – they are not be eligible for benefits.

Question 22:What is being done for unemployed individuals who still cannot access unemployment? Phones (when the only option is to call) and site are not working, and people are being denied automatically. When will the stimulus (\$600 per week) go into effect?

Answer: We apologize for your difficulties. The high claims volume has slowed processing times, but our 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 to 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturdays, and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Sundays. In addition, all benefits will be retroactive to the date claimants became eligible.

Please know that each claim is important to us. We understand the frustration the website and call center issues have caused during what is already a stressful time. We also understand the urgency of providing Ohioans with the resources they need to support their families. We are grateful for everyone’s patience as we build our capacity to process this unprecedented number of claims and assist all the Ohioans who need help.

Question 23:Am I still required to search for work or conduct reemployment activities during the pandemic?

Answer: 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.”

Question 24:Am I still required to participate in Unemployment Compensation Reemployment Services (UCRS) or Reemployment and Eligibility Services (RESEA) programs?

Answer: No. Both programs have been suspended until further notice.

Question 25:My driver’s license is expired, and I can’t renew it because the BMV is shut down. Can I still file for unemployment?

Answer: 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.

Question 26:Is Disaster Unemployment Assistance available in Ohio?

Answer: At this time, no, but please continue to check back for updates. Additional information and support for Ohioans can be found at <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/>.

Question 27:How can I change my banking information?

Answer: You can do that online. Just log into your account at unemployment.ohio.gov and look for that option on the main menu.

Question 28:How much can I expect to receive in benefits if my application is approved?

Answer: The weekly benefit amount is typically half the claimant's previous wages up to a set maximum. For more detailed information, see page 19 of the Worker's Guide to Unemployment Insurance at jfs.ohio.gov/form55213.

Question 29:Do you need to have been working for the past 20 weeks to apply?

Answer: No. 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 in March would be calculated on the four quarters beginning October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019. For a detailed explanation of the base period, see pages 14-16 of the [Worker's Guide to Unemployment Insurance](#).)

Question 30:How long can a person receive benefits? Could unemployment be offered indefinitely through this crisis?

Answer: Claimants may receive up to 26 weeks of benefits a year. Currently, we have no extension of benefits in place.

Question 31:I received notification that I need to verify the Social Security number for myself or my dependents, but I need a replacement Social Security card and the Social Security offices are closed. What can I do?

Answer: Call your local Social Security office. To find the number, visit <https://secure.ssa.gov/ICON/main.jsp>. When speaking with Social Security staff, request a "Numi Lite" form, which is a verification of your Social Security number. You can then email this form to UI_Respond@jfs.ohio.gov.

Question 32:As a foster parent, can I add my foster children as dependents on my unemployment application?

Answer: No, the only dependents that may be claimed for the purposes of unemployment are natural children, stepchildren, and adopted children.

Question 33:If my employer continues to provide health insurance, will it impact my benefits?

Answer: No.

Question 34:I got married since I made an account to last file for unemployment, and the website will not let me change my last name What should I do?

Answer: For the time being, you should continue with the application process using your former name. At the same time, you will need to submit proof of your name change, such as a copy of your Social Security card or your marriage license. You can send it either via email to UI_Respond@jfs.ohio.gov or by fax to 614-466-7449. It is recommended that you also include your former information in addition to the new information when sending in your request for a name change.

Question 35:What is unemployment insurance impact on tipped workers?

Answer: That depends how the employer reported the employee's wages. If the employer reported tips as part of the employee's wage, it would be reflected on their tax reporting and therefore the UI benefit would be based on wage with tips. If the employer

did not include tips in the wage, the employee will need to file an affidavit with their tipped wages for ODJFS to review.

Question 36:How should tipped workers calculate their weekly wages?

Answer: Tips should be included in reported earnings. Employers report quarterly earnings, which include the tips that employees report for each pay period. Those reports are used to determine the claimant's average weekly wage.

Question 37:If I am on Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave through my employer, can I receive unemployment benefits?

Answer: No. Unemployment benefits are available only if you are unemployed. Employees on FMLA through their employer are not unemployed.

Question 38:If I was paid more than I was entitled to and have an overpayment, will my benefits going forward be offset for repayment, even if I am unemployed as a result of the coronavirus?

Answer: Yes.

Question 39:If I have penalty weeks as a result of fraudulent misrepresentation, will I still be required to serve them, even if I am unemployed as a result of the coronavirus?

Answer: Yes.

Question 40:When will I know if I will receive unemployment benefits? When could I receive my first payment?

Answer: We are 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 chose direct deposit, your first payment will be deposited into your account within a few business days. If you chose 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.

Apply for Benefits

Ohio has two ways to file an application for Unemployment Insurance Benefits:

- **Online**
File online at <http://unemployment.ohio.gov>, 24 hours/day, 7 days/week. Service may be limited during nightly system updating. Check the website for available services. Please be sure to follow the instructions. If you do not have access to a computer, visit your local library where computers are available for public use. **Please note that your local library may be closed or have reduced hours due to the coronavirus (COVID-19).**
- **Telephone**
Call toll-free 1-877-644-6562 or TTY 1-614-387-8408, (excluding holidays).
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.

For any other calls, regular business hours are: Monday through Friday, 8 AM - 5 PM.

To apply for Unemployment Insurance Benefits, you will need:

- Your Social Security number
- Your driver's license or state ID number
- Your name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address
- Name, address, telephone number, and dates of employment with each employer you worked for during the past 6 weeks of employment
- The reason you became unemployed from each employer
- Dependents' names, Social Security numbers, and dates of birth
- If claiming dependents, your spouse's name, Social Security number, and birth date
- If you are not a U.S. citizen or national, alien registration number and expiration date
- Your regular occupation and job skills

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)
 - SF-8 or SF-50 form (for federal government employment)

Once your application has been filed:

- You will receive further information by mail or e-mail. E-mail will be sent from OJI@odjfs.state.oh.us.
- Your claim will be assigned to a Processing Center, based on the last four digits of the your Social Security number. [Click here for a list of Processing Centers by Social Security number.](#)
- If filing online and you need your Personal Identification Number (PIN) reset, please call toll-free 1-866-962-4064.