



COVID-19 and Unemployment Insurance Frequently Asked Questions for Employees

If you are questioning whether you qualify for unemployment benefits, we encourage you to apply. Following your application, we will work with you to determine if you are eligible for unemployment benefits. **Note: Information is updated frequently. Check back for updates.**

Am I eligible to apply for unemployment benefits?

In general, you are eligible for unemployment benefits if you meet all of the following criteria:

- You have been connected to the workforce for long enough to meet monetary eligibility rules (generally at least five quarters)
- You are able and available for suitable employment
- You were laid off through no fault of your own

Specific to COVID-19, if any of these scenarios relate to you, you should apply and may be eligible:

- Your employer temporarily ceased operations with the expectation you will return to work. This is sometimes referred to as being “furloughed.” The application process is the same whether you are laid off or furloughed.
- You are quarantined, but not showing symptoms, and will return to work
- You are able and available (not showing any symptoms of COVID-19), but are unable to go to work because your place of employment has been quarantined

What if I am still working but my hours are reduced?

If you were full-time and see your hours reduced due to COVID-19, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits. When you apply you will report your earnings which will then determine how much or if they are eligible for unemployment benefits.

How do I apply for unemployment benefits?

You may file for unemployment benefits online at jobs.utah.gov/ui/home.

Who does not qualify for unemployment benefits due to COVID-19?

You may not be eligible for unemployment benefits if:

- You are on paid leave, as you are still considered employed
- You continue to work in a telework environment, as you are still employed

What does “able and available” mean?

In the context of unemployment benefits, being “able and available” is a federal requirement intended to ensure that individuals filing for benefits remain attached to the labor market by being able to work and available to work for their employer after a temporary separation, or to a new employer if an individual is not attached to a former employer.

What if I have paid leave?

If you are on paid leave, you are not considered unemployed since you are still receiving income from your employer.

What if I am self employed?

Self-employed individuals may not be eligible for unemployment insurance, but may be eligible for other financial assistance available like [SNAP \(food stamps\)](#) or [Pandemic Unemployment Assistance](#). Use the “[Am I Eligible?](#)” feature to help determine which program to apply for. Claimants enter their Social Security number; if it comes back with an eligible monetary decision the claimant should apply for traditional unemployment insurance at jobs.utah.gov/ui/home, ineligible decisions should apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance at jobs.utah.gov/jsp/utjobs/pua-login.

Can my employer prevent me from filing for unemployment insurance?

Your employer may not directly or indirectly in any manner obstruct or impede the filing of claims for unemployment insurance benefits.

If my employer temporarily closes and I receive unemployment benefits will I be required to make the four new job contacts weekly?

Work search requirements will be reviewed when you file your claim. You may be granted a work search deferral, meaning you will not be required to make the four new weekly job contacts.

What if I need to take time off work because I contract COVID-19?

If you are not receiving paid leave, then you may be eligible for unemployment benefits, provided you meet the eligibility requirements described above. If you are receiving paid leave while taking time off from work, you are not eligible for unemployment benefits.

If I become seriously ill and I need to quit my job as a result of COVID-19, will I qualify for unemployment benefits?

Depending on your situation you may not be denied unemployment benefits if you have to quit your job without any alternative to retain your position. However, each separation is unique and would have to be dealt with individually before eligibility can be assessed.

What if I am asked by a medical professional or public health official to quarantine as a result of COVID-19, but I am not sick?

Once you stop working, you should apply for unemployment benefits as soon as possible at jobs.utah.gov/ui/home. Generally, your employer should be working with you to follow the advice of your health care professional or health official. If you are employed and expect to return to work following the quarantine, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits for the duration of the quarantine. If you lose your job as a result of the quarantine, then eligibility from the separation will need to be decided along with your ability and availability to work while in quarantine.

What if my employer goes out of business as a result of COVID-19?

The closure of your employer's business is considered a lay-off or reduction in force. You may be eligible for unemployment benefits, provided you meet all other eligibility requirements.

My employer has shut down operations temporarily because an employee is sick and we have been asked to isolate or quarantine as a result of COVID-19. Am I eligible for unemployment benefits?

If you are job attached and expect to return to work after the quarantine is over, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits while you are in quarantine.

What if I am temporarily laid off work because business has slowed down as a result of COVID-19?

If you are job attached and expect to return to work following the quarantine, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits while you are in quarantine. If you lose your job as a result of the quarantine, then eligibility from the separation will need to be decided along with your ability and availability to work while in quarantine.

I am a part-time employee. Am I eligible for standby?

Part-time employees can be eligible for unemployment benefits, as long as you meet all other eligibility requirements.

My employer is now paying me my normal salary after getting federal/ SBA assistance, will that impact my unemployment benefits?

If your employer has decided to pay you for back weeks of normal salary/pay and you also filed for unemployment benefits for those same weeks, you will need to notify the department that you have received back pay. Please note this may require that you repay the Unemployment Insurance Division benefits for those weeks that your employer is now paying you for.

If your employer has decided to pay your regular salary moving forward, you will not be eligible for Unemployment because you are still receiving your normal pay/ salary. If you find yourself in this situation, stop filing your weekly claim as you will not receive any additional benefits.

With the recent change in the waiting week law, will I get paid for the week I waited prior to the law change?

No. The ability to waive the waiting week for Unemployment Insurance (UI) during an emergency was passed and signed into law on April 22, 2020. The department immediately entered into a contract with the U.S. Department of Labor to draw down the federal funds but was informed that the federal funds would not be available retroactively, rather would only be available for applications submitted April 26, 2020, forward.

It is important to note that all individuals that filed a claim prior to April 26 will receive a benefits for all eligible weeks, however, they will receive that additional week at the end of their claim rather than during their already served waiting week.