

COVID-19 Pandemic Unemployment Benefits

Last Updated:
April 21, 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

Things to have ready when you apply:

- Your Social Security number
- Your driver license or Motor Vehicle ID card number (if you have either one)
- Your complete mailing address and zip code
- A phone number where DOL can reach you from 8 am–5 pm, Monday–Friday
- Your Alien Registration card number (if you are not a U.S. Citizen and have a card)
- Names and addresses of all your employers for the last 18 months, including those in other states
- Employer Registration number or Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) of your most recent employer, listed on your W-2 forms (*don't worry if you don't have this*)

Am I eligible for unemployment benefits?

Highly likely, if you have lost your job or a significant number of paid hours, unless you can telework with pay, or are using paid sick or other paid leave benefits. See [this NYS State Department of Labor \(DOL\) chart](#) for more information^[1].

I'm having trouble getting through to DOL or completing my claim. What should I do?

Claim completion has been a huge problem, but as of April 10, DOL has launched a new, streamlined online process on [the DOL website](#).

But haven't I been losing benefits because I can't get through to DOL or complete my claim?

No, the benefits will be backdated to the first week you experienced unemployment.

How do I apply for benefits?

The [DOL website](#) explains the process.

If I'm a gig worker, independent contractor, or self-employed, do I need to file two different applications?

No, all workers complete the same application. DOL has prepared [this document](#) that provides special guidance for self-employed workers filling out the application. If additional information is needed, DOL will tell you. This [DOL flowchart](#) explains it^[2].

What if I've already been approved for UI benefits?

Just keep filing your weekly claims.

What do I have to do to receive the extra \$600 weekly payments?

Nothing - once your benefits claim has been approved you will automatically be entitled to this extra \$600.



DISCLAIMER: The information provided in this document does not, and is not intended to, constitute legal advice. All information available in this document is for general informational purposes only. Information in this document may not be up-to-date. For legal advice, you should contact a lawyer to assess your situation.

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What if I used up my 26 weeks of benefits in the last 9 months?

File a new claim. You are likely entitled to additional benefits under the COVID UI program.

When will I start actually receiving these benefits?

DOL advises that its decisions about whether an applicant is eligible can take 2-3 weeks, a process DOL expects to significantly speed up with its new process on [the DOL website](#) starting April 10.

What if I have more questions?

Check out [DOL's Frequently Asked Questions](#) about COVID Unemployment Benefits.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE:

DOL urges New Yorkers to use the [new online system](#), which can handle most applications from start to finish, dramatically reducing the number of New Yorkers who must speak to a claims specialist on the phone.

IF YOU HAVE NOT YET FILED a claim, [labor.ny.gov](#) will direct you to the new, streamlined system.

IF YOU HAVE BEGUN BUT NOT YET COMPLETED FILING a claim and were told to call the call center to complete your claim, DOL advises that its claims specialists will call you to complete your claim; *you should stay close to your phone, expect a call from any number/ blocked number, and be ready to answer calls.*

These instructions apply to and are the same for all workers who may be eligible for unemployment benefits, including those not traditionally covered by these benefits. When workers' claims are approved they will receive *benefits backdated to their first day of unemployment.*

[1] Unfortunately, workers without work authorization are not eligible for any benefits under this program.

[2] For those eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (i.e. those not usually covered), NYSDOL has provided [these guidelines](#) for how to complete the standard application



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