

## CLAIMANT INFORMATION

# COVID-19 unemployment in Ohio FAQs

*Frequently asked questions for claimants in Ohio*

Source: ODJFS <http://jfs.ohio.gov/ouio/CoronavirusAndUI.stm>

**Q:** How do I apply for unemployment insurance benefits?

**A:** Ohio has two ways to apply:

- **Online** — File online [unemployment.ohio.gov](http://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. Call center hours have been extended to Monday through Friday 7 a.m. - 7 p.m., and Saturdays 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. (It is not possible to apply for unemployment benefits in person.)

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

**A:** If you filed before receiving the number, there is no need to adjust your application. Your claim will still be processed and your benefits will not be delayed.

**Q:** How do I reset my PIN number?

**A:** 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. Staff are available 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. To find the phone number of your processing center, visit [jfs.ohio.gov/ouio/claims-processing-center-locations.stm](http://jfs.ohio.gov/ouio/claims-processing-center-locations.stm).

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

**A:** 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 application is processed.

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

**A: Updated:** You may see correspondence in your account before it is available to view. Typically, you will be able to view correspondence once you receive an email notification. However, high claim volumes have caused delays in correspondence processing and system-generated email notifications may have gone out before correspondence was available to view. If you received a new correspondence notification on or prior to March 27, it may not be available yet. If you receive a notification on March 28 or later, that correspondence is ready to view.

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

**A: 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.

**Q:** 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?

**A:** 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.

**Q:** Are self-employed individuals and contractors eligible for unemployment benefits?

**A: Updated:** Currently, self-employed individuals and 1099 contractors are not eligible for unemployment benefits. However, Governor DeWine has asked the federal government to implement a Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program. DUA programs are sometimes implemented after natural disasters and offer benefits to individuals who do not qualify for regular unemployment. For continuing updates, please visit <http://ifs.ohio.gov/ouio/CoronavirusAndUI.stm>.

**Q:** Will childcare workers be compensated if childcare centers close?

**A:** Individuals who are laid off because of a COVID-19-related businesses closure may be eligible for benefits. Some childcare 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.

**Q:** If you are working carryout/fewer hours, can you apply?

**A:** 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.

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

**A:** 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. 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](#).

**Q:** If you have two jobs and lost one of them, are you eligible for unemployment?

**A:** 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.

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

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

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

**A:** 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 would therefore be ineligible. However, the facts of each circumstance are important. For example, 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.

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

**A:** 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 eligible for benefits.

**Q:** Am I still 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 they receive benefits has been waived. However, claimants still must be “able and available for work.”

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

**A:** No. Both programs have been suspended until further notice.

**Q:** My driver’s license is expired and I can’t renew it because the BMV is closed. 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.

**Q:** Is Disaster Unemployment Assistance available in Ohio?

**A:** 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/>.

**Q:** How can I change my banking information?

**A:** You can change your banking information online. Log into your account at [unemployment.ohio.gov](https://unemployment.ohio.gov) and look for the option on the main menu.

**Q:** 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. For more detailed information, see page 19 of the Worker's Guide to Unemployment Insurance at [jfs.ohio.gov/form55213](https://jfs.ohio.gov/form55213).

**Q:** Do I need to have been working for the past 20 weeks to apply?

**A:** 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](#).)

**Q:** How long can a person 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.

**Q:** 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?

**A:** 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](mailto:UI_Respond@jfs.ohio.gov).

**Q:** If my employer continues to provide health insurance, will it impact my benefits?

**A:** No.

**Q:** 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?

**A:** 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 email it to [UI\\_Respond@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:UI_Respond@jfs.ohio.gov) or 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.

**Q:** What is the unemployment insurance impact on tipped workers?

**A:** 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.

**Q:** How should tipped workers calculate their weekly wages?

**A:** 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.

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

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

**Q:** 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?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** 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?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** When will I know if I will receive unemployment benefits? When could I receive my first payment?

**A:** 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.