



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

REVIEWED

By Chris Tghe at 8:59 am, Jan 22, 2021

How Do I File for Unemployment Insurance?

The U.S. Department of Labor's unemployment insurance programs provide unemployment benefits to eligible workers who become unemployed through no fault of their own and meet certain other eligibility requirements. Unemployment insurance is a joint state-federal program that provides cash benefits to eligible workers. Each state administers a separate unemployment insurance program, but all states follow the same guidelines established by federal law.

Am I Eligible?

Each state sets its own unemployment insurance benefits eligibility guidelines, but you usually qualify if you:

- Are unemployed through no fault of your own. In most states, this means you have to have separated from your last job due to a lack of available work.
- Meet work and wage requirements. You must meet your state's requirements for wages earned or time worked during an established period of time referred to as a "base period." (In most states, this is usually the first four out of the last five completed calendar quarters before the time that your claim is filed.)
- Meet any additional state requirements. Find details of your [own state's program](#).

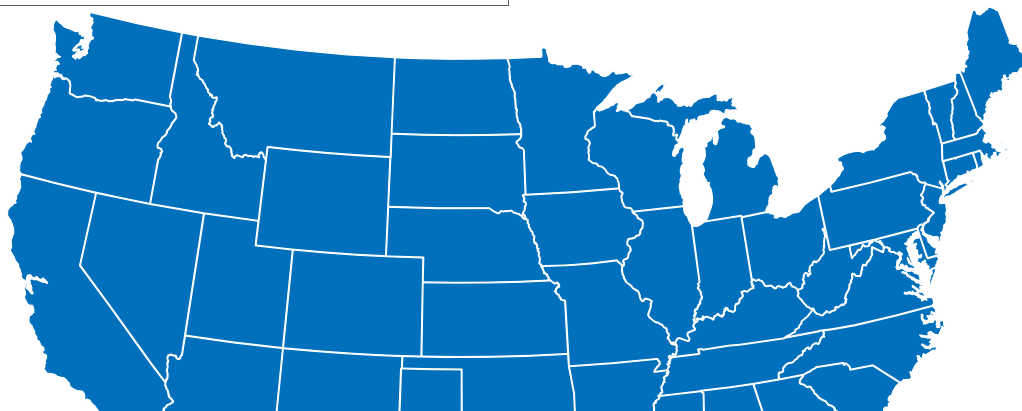
How Do I Apply?

To receive unemployment insurance benefits, you need to file a claim with the unemployment insurance program in the state where you worked. Depending on the state, claims may be filed in person, by telephone, or online.

- You should contact your [state's unemployment insurance program](#) as soon as possible after becoming unemployed.
- Generally, you should file your claim with the state where you worked. If you worked in a state other than the one where you now live or if you worked in multiple states, the state unemployment insurance agency where you now live can provide information about how to file your claim with other states.
- When you file a claim, you will be asked for certain information, such as addresses and dates of your former employment. To make sure your claim is not delayed, be sure to give complete and correct information.
- It generally takes two to three weeks after you file your claim to receive your first benefit check.

Find Your State Unemployment Insurance Office

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200 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20210
[1-866-4-USA-DOL](tel:1-866-4-USA-DOL)
[1-866-487-2365](tel:1-866-487-2365)
www.dol.gov

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