

Florida Reemployment Q&As:

- **What is Reemployment Assistance?**

Unemployment Insurance was rebranded with the name **Reemployment Assistance** to reflect the comprehensive goal of assisting Floridians find work during periods of unemployment through monetary assistance when eligible and training through Florida's CareerSource centers.

- **What is CONNECT?**

CONNECT is Florida's Reemployment Assistance claims system. CONNECT offers access to file, manage, and review your claim details 24/7.

- **What are your hours of operation?**

The CONNECT claims system is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Contact Center hours are Monday through Friday 7:30 AM to 6:30 PM and Saturday and Sunday 8 AM to 2 PM EST.

- **How do I file a claim? Where do I file a claim?**

You can file a claim online via Florida's CONNECT claims system. If you are seeking Reemployment Assistance Benefits, please click [here](#) to access the CONNECT system to file your claim. If you **cannot** file a claim online because of legal reasons, computer illiteracy, language barriers, or disabilities you may call 1-800-681-8102. Your claim can be filed by phone Monday through Friday 7:30 AM to 6:30 PM EST, and Saturday and Sunday 8 AM to 2 PM.

- **When do benefit claims begin?**

Your claim is effective Sunday of the week you complete your application. By state law, the first week of a claim for which you would have been eligible for payment is an unpaid week. This week is considered your "waiting week."

- **Where do I go to file a claim?**

Claims are filed online through our [CONNECT](#) system. If you need assistance or have questions about your claim, you can contact us by [e-mail](#) or by phone at 1-800-204-2418. If you have a claim, please use the e-mail address you have provided in CONNECT.

- **Who pays for my Reemployment Assistance benefits?**
Florida employers pay for RA through a tax managed by the Florida Department of Revenue. It is one of the employer's business costs. Workers do not pay reemployment taxes.

- **Can I receive benefits if I am placed on part-time work?**
If your employer reduces your hours against your will, you may be eligible for partial benefits. If you are earning less than \$275 in gross earnings per week, you can file a claim to determine if you would be eligible to receive partial payments.

- **Sometimes the system tells me to call back later. Why is that?**
We experience periods of high call volume. If you are unable to reach the department by phone, please submit an [e-mail](#) for information regarding your claim. If you have a claim, please use the e-mail address you have provided in CONNECT.

- **I was scheduled for an appointment with my local CareerSource do I have to go?**
Yes. If you are unable to attend, you may contact the location where you are scheduled in advance and you *may* be able to reschedule your appointment. Missing an appointment with the CareerSource requires an adjudicator to review your claim and determine if the appointment was missed due to good cause.

- **What do I need to file a claim for benefits?**
Before filing, make sure you have the following documents available:
 - Social Security number
 - Driver's License or State ID number
 - Your employment for the last 18 months including for each employer:
 - Name, address, and phone number
 - First & last day of work
 - Gross earnings (before taxes are taken out) during the listed dates
 - Reason for separation
 - FEIN number (this is found on any W2 or 1099 tax forms you have received)
 - If you don't have the FEIN, you can use employer details off of a recent paystub

Additionally, if you are one of the following, make sure you have this additional information available:

- Non-U.S. citizen: Alien registration number or other work authorization form
- Military employee: DD-214 Member 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, or 8 may be used
- Federal employee: SF 8 or SF 50
- Union member: union name, hall number, and phone number

- **I am missing a piece of information, should I still file?**

Missing information will create additional delays in determining your eligibility. However, if missing information is unavoidable, your claim can still be processed.

- **I have already filed within the last year; do I need to file another claim?**

If your previous claim has a remaining balance and has not expired, you need to file a “**Reopen**” after logging into your CONNECT account. This is a shortened application to update your work history since your original application was filed. Once completed, any recent employment will be reviewed and weeks of benefits will be scheduled for you to claim.

- **I am having trouble entering my citizenship/work authorization information.**

Please enter the number of the authorizing document you are able to provide. If you continue to have difficulties, the system will accept your information after several attempts. However, a copy of your document will be requested after your application is completed.

- **Do I need to enter an employer I only worked with a short time?**

Yes, your entire work history is required from the last 18 months. Regardless of the length of time worked, all employment is used in determining your benefits.

- **I cannot enter one of my employers in the application, what do I do?**

Please check for the following common mistakes. Make sure:

- There are no mistakes with the start and end dates

- The employment end date is during or after the base period indicated by CONNECT
- The employment is not already on the claim. You can use the “Previous” button to return and check.

Carefully review the error message you receive as this will try to assist in correcting the error. If the problem persists, please contact the department at 1-800-204-2418 for assistance.

- **What do I do once I complete my application?**

You are required to complete a few additional items after completing your application.

- **Request Benefit Payment**

You are scheduled to return to the CONNECT system every two weeks to request your benefits. Completing this process submits your request for payment during your weeks of unemployment, even when your claim is pending for review. **It is important that you request your benefits within 7 days of your scheduled date regardless of your claim status.**

- **Workforce Registration**

~~You are required to register with [Employ Florida](#). When creating (or updating) your EF profile, you must provide a **valid e-mail address**, upload or **create a current resume**, and **complete background history** on your profile. Please see [these step-by-step](#) instructions for more information. **IF YOU DO NOT COMPLETE FULL WORK REGISTRATION, YOU WILL NOT RECEIVE PAYMENT.**~~

DEO has suspended this requirement for any claims filed with an effective date of March 15, 2020, through the week ending May 2, 2020.

- **Work Search Contacts**

~~You are required to provide five work search contacts for every week of benefits you request from the department. Report these contacts during your biweekly requests for benefits.~~

DEO has suspended this requirement beginning the week of March 15, 2020 through the week ending May 2, 2020.

- **Any incomplete fact-findings**

During the initial processing of your claim, many reviews occur regarding your eligibility for benefits. You will be mailed correspondence or sent an email reminder to check your CONNECT inbox based on your selected contact method. Please complete any requests for information as soon as possible. Any correspondence received via mail can be completed online. You can fax completed forms to 1-877-934-1504.

- **Watch for your notice of monetary determination**

This notice will provide details on the amount of benefits you can receive per week (weekly benefit amount), the total balance your claim has (maximum benefit amount), as well as the history of wages that has established your claim.

- **Appointment with your local CareerSource office**

After receiving several weeks of benefits, you will be scheduled for a mandatory appointment with your local CareerSource office. It will provide one-on-one services to help create a reemployment plan. Your appointment notice will be mailed to you, so please ensure your address in both [CONNECT](#) and [Employ Florida](#) are up-to-date. Failure to attend your scheduled appointment will result in a review of your eligibility and potentially delay or deny your benefits.

- **Where do I request my weeks of benefits?**

Once you are scheduled to request benefits, you will see the option in the CONNECT menu “Request Benefit Payment.”

- **How long do I have to request my benefits?**

You have **7 days** to request benefits from your scheduled date. Failure to request your benefits in a timely manner will result in the loss of benefit weeks.

- **When I request my benefits, it says I have not completed the full registration with Workforce Services. I completed my profile already, how do I fix this?**

~~Please verify you have completed ALL three required sections of your Employ Florida (EF) profile. Please see [these step-by-step instructions](#) to verify you have completed all sections correctly. If you have a preexisting profile, you must update the information for completion on a new claim. If you have verified all parts have been completed correctly, it may be possible that you have entered your Social Security number, date of birth, or gender incorrectly. If the information does not match between the two systems, CONNECT will be unable to verify the completion of your profile. Please check your EF profile and verify that your information is correct. If you are still unable to resolve this issue please contact us at 1-800-204-2418.~~

DEO has suspended this requirement for any claims filed with an effective date of March 15, 2020, through the week ending May 2, 2020.

- **What is a valid work search contact and what information do you need?**

You are required to provide the following details for each job contact:

- Date of contact
- Method of contact (in person, online, fax, phone, etc.)
- Business name including telephone number & complete address, website URL or an e-mail
- Results of your search
- Type of work sought
- **How many work search contacts do I need to provide to the department per benefit week?**
- ~~You are required to provide five work search contacts per week. The following are exceptions and exemptions:~~

- If you reside in a **low-population county**, you are required to submit three contacts weekly
- If you are a **union member**, you are required to remain in good standing and maintain regular contact with your Union.
- If you are on **temporary layoff** and will return to the same employer within 8 weeks, you are exempt from work search requirements.
- If you are offered **new employment** and have a start date **within 6 weeks**, you are exempt from work search requirements.
- If you are a part of an **approved training program**, you are exempt from work search requirements.

If you qualify for one of these exemptions and still receive a request for full work search information, please contact us at 1-800-204-2418 for assistance.

DEO has suspended the requirement to provide work search contacts beginning the week of March 15, 2020 through the week ending May 2, 2020.

- **When will I receive my debit card?**

The Way2Go debit card will be issued by mail after the first payment on your claim is made via debit card. If you have previously been issued a debit card, it is valid for **three years** from the initial issue date. Your previous card will receive any payments on your current claim. If you have lost your previous debit card and/or have not received your debit card 10 business days after your first debit payment, please contact our card provider, Conduent, at:

U.S.: 1-833-888-2780

International: 1-210-334-6615 (This includes Puerto Rico. This line is not toll-free)



- **Why do I have a negative balance on my debit card?**
The debit card provider, Conduent, has certain fees associated with the card. This includes a limited number of contacts to their phone lines per month. Please review the information issued with your card for more details surrounding these fees. Conduent also provides additional methods to check your balance including SMS notifications (text messages), checking at approved ATMs, as well as a web portal to view your balance information. Please visit www.goprogram.com for more information.
- **Why isn't my CONNECT PIN working for my debit card?**
Your CONNECT PIN is separate from the debit card PIN. You will need to follow the instructions included with the debit card in order to activate and establish a PIN.
- **Why can't I enter my banking information on CONNECT?**
There are several reasons your banking information may be rejected:

- The information you entered is incorrect.
- The interface to verify the information is currently down.
- Your bank is not approved for direct deposit.
- You are attempting to use a prepaid card for direct deposit purposes.

Unfortunately, we do not accept every financial institution; your bank may not be eligible for direct deposit. Please select debit card if you have no other financial institution.

- **What is an appeal hearing?**

An appeal hearing is scheduled when you or an employer disagree with a Department determination and wish to have a hearing with an appeals referee. To protect your rights, participating in the hearing is important, even if the other party filed the appeal. The decision from this hearing will replace the determination that was appealed.

- **How do I file an appeal?**

You must request an appeal hearing within 20 calendar days after the distributed date of the determination. If the 20th day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday you may file the appeal the next business day. You may submit your request for an appeal by mail, fax, email, or online through CONNECT. Please complete a [Notice of Appeal](#) for your request by mail or fax. Please use the [CONNECT](#) guide to file online. To submit by email, attach your Notice of Appeal and send to RA.AppealsClerks@deo.myflorida.com

- **How do I file a late appeal?**

If you miss the 20 day period and would like to request a late appeal, you may fax the request to 850-617-6504 and include justification for the late appeal.

- **How do I know an appeal was filed?**

You will receive notification in your CONNECT inbox or by mail depending on your correspondence preference.

- **Should I continue to request benefit payment?**

Yes, as long as you are unemployed, even if a hearing was requested or

held, a decision was issued, or an appeal was made to the RA Appeals Commission or Judicial Court. Be sure that you continue to follow all other instructions from the RA office.

- **Where are hearings held?**

Appeal hearings are held by telephone. You will receive a Notice of Hearing indicating the date and time an appeals referee will be calling you for your hearing.

- **How is the appeal hearing conducted?**

The hearing officer will call you on the day and time of your scheduled hearing. The hearing is your opportunity to present all information, including verbal statements and documentation. During the hearing, you will have an opportunity to respond to questions and provide information about the noticed issue. If there are other parties or witnesses present during the hearing, you will also be able to hear their testimony and ask them questions. If you provided or received documents for the hearing, the documents may be discussed during the hearing.

- **What happens if I don't participate?**

If the party who filed the appeal participates, a hearing will be held. The decision will be based on the evidence presented. If you do not participate, your evidence will not be considered. If you filed the appeal and do not participate, your case will be dismissed.

- **How can I arrange for witnesses?**

Contact and ask the witness to testify. The best witness is one with personal knowledge of the facts. A witness who was present at an event is much better than one who was told about it by someone else. If possible, you and your witness(es) should be at the same location for the hearing. If a witness cannot be at your location and must be contacted at a different telephone number, provide the witness' name and telephone number to the Office of Appeals by phone, fax, or mail. Instruct the witness to be available at the scheduled hearing time and to remain available until dismissed by you or the appeals referee. If a witness refuses to testify voluntarily, a subpoena can be requested by writing to the address on the *Notice of Hearing*. Mail or fax the request as soon as possible, so the subpoena can be served before the hearing.

Include the case docket number; the witness' name, address, and telephone number (if available), as well as a detailed description of any document(s) the witness should furnish for the hearing.

Office of Appeals
P.O. Box 5250
Tallahassee, FL 32399-5250
Fax number: 850-617-6504

- **What if I need a translator?**

Translation will be arranged for parties who indicate a primary language other than English. If a translator is needed and the *Notice of Hearing* does not indicate a translator was arranged, contact the Office of Appeals at once to advise what language is needed so arrangements can be made.

- **What if I need to change my hearing date?**

A postponement may be requested if there is a compelling reason why you cannot participate as scheduled. The request can be made in writing before the hearing or on the record during the hearing. A written request can be submitted through CONNECT, by fax, mail, or by email to DEOAppeals.Magistrate@deo.myflorida.com. **The Request for Continuance form should be used.** If you are unable to use this form, include a statement of good cause for continuance and reference your docket number. The referee will let you know in writing if the request is granted. If a written reply is not received, assume the request was denied. Be available for the hearing and prepared to present your case.

- **What if I missed the hearing?**

If you missed a hearing you must exercise due diligence in requesting re-opening. Any request for rehearing must be filed online through your CONNECT account or by mailing, emailing or faxing a written request to the address or fax number on the Notice of Hearing or Decision. To submit by email, attach a statement with your reason for not attending the hearing and send it to RA.AppealsClerks@deo.myflorida.com. The Docket Number for the missed hearing must be included in the statement. An appeals referee decision will only be rescinded if good cause for nonappearance is

shown. Only compelling and necessary reasons constitute good cause. If your rehearing request is granted, you must present evidence of good cause at the new hearing and show due diligence in trying to re-arrange your schedule or requesting postponement. If good cause is not shown, the prior decision will be reinstated.

- **Can I withdraw my appeal?**

You may withdraw an appeal by mail or fax to the Appeals Office address or fax number on the *Notice of Hearing*. Include your social security number and docket number. In most situations, a withdrawn appeal cannot be reopened.

Office of Appeals
P.O. Box 5250
Tallahassee, FL 32399-5250
Fax number: 850-617-6504

- **Should I hire an attorney?**

Professional representation is not required and most people represent themselves at reemployment assistance hearings. You have the right to be represented by an attorney or authorized representative at your own expense. Fees for representing you must be approved by the appeals referee, but paid by you. Legal representation may be available through a local Legal Aid Office at reduced or no cost for low-income claimants. For information about hiring an attorney, contact the Florida Bar Association toll-free at 1-800-342-8011. If you hire an attorney or authorize someone to represent you, provide the person's name, address, and telephone number to the Office of Appeals to ensure all notices are sent to that person.

- **When will I receive a decision?**

You will receive a decision in the mail as soon as possible after the hearing. The decision will include findings of fact, conclusions of law, and the result, which will affirm, reverse, or modify the determination or dismiss the appeal. An appeal decision can be viewed in your CONNECT inbox or by selecting the Determination, Pending Issues and Decision Summary page in your CONNECT account.

- **What if I disagree with the decision?**

If you disagree with the decision, you can request a review by the RA Appeals Commission. Instructions for requesting review are on the decision document. An online appeal request may be filed with the RA Appeals Commission [here](#). Any request for review must be filed within 20 calendar days after the decision was mailed. The RA Appeals Commission will not hold another hearing; its decision will be based on the testimony and other evidence presented to the referee and how the referee used that evidence to reach a decision. Therefore, presenting all of your evidence at the hearing is very important. Upon completing its review, the RA Appeals Commission will mail a written order to all parties. If you receive an unfavorable decision will have to repay benefits that should not have been paid. An employer who receives an unfavorable decision may receive benefit charges that increase the employer's tax rate or require reimbursement to the trust fund.

- **Will the case record be confidential?**

No, except for your social security number, appeal information becomes public record.