

COVID-19 and Unemployment Insurance Benefits - Questions and Answers

- [Español](#)

NOTE: The CARES Act has changed eligibility and benefit amounts for Unemployment Insurance. [Find out more about UI Extension Under CARES Act](#)
Need step-by-step instructions on how to apply for Unemployment Insurance benefits?

[Learn How to Apply for UI](#)

Is it still a requirement to apply for jobs while receiving benefits?

No. DES is temporarily suspending the “actively seeking work” requirement. What this means is that for the duration of the emergency declaration an individual will no longer be required to look for work and apply for other employment while collecting unemployment insurance benefits.

We encourage individuals to review the guidance provided in the weekly claim system at AZUI.com immediately adjacent to each required question. Our system has been updated to include specific examples of COVID-19 related scenarios impacting claimants.

Has the waiting week/period been removed per the Executive Order?

Yes. The Department is temporarily suspending the waiting week.

Will workers impacted by COVID-19 qualify for unemployment benefits?

Most likely. DES encourages the following individuals impacted by COVID-19 to apply for Unemployment Insurance Benefits:

- Individuals whose employer has permanently or temporarily ceased or drastically reduced operations due to COVID-19 resulting in a reduction of wages;
- Individuals who, due to requirements that the individual be quarantined, are separated from employment and do not have any available paid leave even if the individual has an expectation of returning to work after the quarantine is over;
- Individuals who leave employment due to a risk of exposure or infection and are a member of a population that is particularly susceptible to COVID-19;
- Individuals who leave employment to care for a family member who has been infected with COVID-19; or
- Individuals who for any other scenario are separated from work for reasons related to COVID-19.

When should individuals impacted by COVID-19 apply for benefits?

Individuals should apply as soon as they know that their employment and income will be affected by COVID-19. The factors of each circumstance are important. If the employer required the individual to stay home, did not offer telework, and was not offering compensation, the individual might be eligible for benefits if they meet the monetary and weekly eligibility criteria.

When will individuals get the additional \$600 that was passed by Congress? Do individuals need to do anything different with their claims?

These benefits will begin to pay out starting the week of April 13. Retroactive payments will also be made for the weeks starting March 29. Individuals will not have to submit additional paperwork to qualify, it will be applied on top of their existing benefits.

How can individuals apply for unemployment benefits?

The fastest and easiest way to apply is online www.azui.com anytime between 12:00 a.m. on Sunday through 6:00 p.m. on Friday. Individuals without Internet access should call 1 (877) 600- 2722. Hard copies of the applications are also available in the documents center (UB-105 Arizona Initial Claim for Unemployment Insurance) at www.azdes.gov.

An individual can know his or her application is successfully completed when reaching the end of the application, certifying the statements made on the application are true, and receiving a confirmation number.

What information is needed to apply?

When submitting an application for an initial claim, individuals will need to provide their Social Security Number, mailing address, county of residence and, if available, their Driver License or state-issued ID number. In addition, they will need the following information about their employment history:

- The names, addresses, and phone numbers of all employers for the last 18 months including the correct mailing address and telephone number for the most recent employer
- The last day worked immediately prior to filing the UI claim
- Amount (before deductions) and date of any payment for severance, vacation, holiday or unused sick pay
- The name and local number of your union hall, if applicable
- Alien Registration Number, if applicable
- Copy # 4 of DD Form 214 if released from the military in the last 18 months
- SF 8 or SF 50 if employed in Federal Civilian service in the last 18 months
- Start date and monthly benefit amount of any pension (other than Social Security), you will need the start date of the pension and the monthly benefit amount

What am I eligible to receive if I qualify for benefits?

DES can provide individuals who have lost their job through no fault of their own with a weekly stipend of up to \$240 to supplement lost income. The [CARES Act](#) will provide additional benefits as well

Do I have to file a claim every week?

Yes. To maintain benefits, applicants are required to file a weekly claim by visiting our [online Unemployment Insurance claims system](#). The week starts on a Sunday and ends on Saturday. Once an initial claim is filed, individuals must wait until the following week to submit a weekly claim. Weekly claims must be filed even if the applicant's initial claim is pending.

How long can I receive unemployment benefits if I qualify?

The CARES Act allows for up to 39 weeks of benefits to claimants. Under the regular UI program, claimants are eligible for up to 26 weeks of benefits. These benefits can be extended an additional 13 weeks under the CARES Act. In addition, claimants that are not eligible for the regular UI program or have exhausted their benefits under that program may be eligible for the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program for up to 39 weeks inclusive of the weeks they received regular UI benefits.

How long do claims take to process?

DES is doing everything it can to get Arizonans benefits as soon as possible. However, DES is experiencing a high number of claims due to COVID-19 and processing times could vary. Additionally, if there are issues with the claim, such as incomplete information, processing the claim could take up to 21 days. Prior to the increased claim volume, payments were being made, on average, within 14- calendar days after benefits have been processed and approved.

How does an individual receive benefits?

Direct deposit is available at www.AZUI.com. Applicants may also receive an Electronic Payment Card (EPC) issued by Bank of America (applicants who have received UI within less than 3 years or are

currently receiving child support, will not receive a new EPC card). The EPC card will have a zero balance until the applicants first benefit payment has been processed.

What happens after I complete the application process?

Within approximately one week of filing an initial claim, applicants will receive information from DES in the mail. They must sign and return the Certificate of Understanding to the address or fax number listed on the form. If DES needs more information to process the claim, the applicant will be mailed an additional questionnaire to complete and send back.

What do I do if I receive documentation from DES through the mail and I need to return it, but my deadline is coming up quickly and I can't return it in time?

If you received documentation that needs to be sent back to DES and the deadline is close or has just passed, please continue to fax or mail it in anyways. DES will accept documents submitted past the deadline, and your eligibility will not be affected.

Am I eligible for UI benefits if I am a freelancer, or self-employed?

Possibly. The CARES Act created a Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program for individuals that are self-employed, contract workers, those ineligible for state unemployment benefits or have exhausted benefits. Arizona is currently working on the implementation of this new program. Individuals are encouraged to file their applications now for processing as soon as the program is implemented in Arizona. Find the most up-to-date information on the [Pandemic Unemployment Assistance page](#).

What should applicants do if they make an error on their application?

If an error is made after a claim is submitted, please call 1 (877) 600-2722. Claims cannot be edited after they are submitted.

What is the process for partial unemployment for people whose hours have been reduced as a result of COVID-19?

If your wages have been reduced as a result of COVID-19, you may file for benefits at www.AZUI.com. Depending on your individual circumstance and the amount of gross wages (wages earned before taxes/deductions) you have earned, you may be eligible for benefits.

Weekly earnings will impact your weekly benefit amount. When filing your mandatory weekly claim (the benefit week starts on Sunday and ends on Saturday) you must report all earnings, and earnings in excess of \$30 are deducted from the weekly benefit amount. Note, you must receive at least \$1 in benefits in order to qualify for the additional \$600 Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) payment. For example, if you qualify for the maximum weekly benefit amount of \$240 and you receive \$180 in earnings for a week, provided you met the other weekly eligibility requirements, you would receive \$90 + the \$600 FPUC payment for that weekly claim. If you receive at least \$240 in earnings for a week, you will not be eligible for any benefits for that week.

What should people do who applied prior to the Executive Order?

If an individual was denied because they did not meet the eligibility requirements, they will receive a Determination of Deputy in the mail. However, if the individual believes they are eligible or disagrees with the determination, they should contact the call center at 1 (877) 600-2722, for assistance with their claim. The Department will reconsider the claim using new information and the most up to date eligibility criteria. If the reconsideration is denied and the claimant disagrees with the Determination of Deputy, they may file an appeal within 15 calendar days from the date the original determination was mailed. An appeal may be filed by telephone, in writing, or by going online at, <https://uiappeals.azdes.gov/>.

Is there a COVID-19 identifier on the application?

Yes, the Department has added a COVID-19 identifier to the application process.