

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

How to Apply and Eligibility Frequently Asked Questions

APPLY ONLINE at: my.unemployment.wisconsin.gov

When To Apply

- You are totally unemployed,
- Your weekly earnings are reduced,
- You expect to be laid off within the next 13 weeks, or
- You are participating in the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program.

Unsure you will qualify? Apply to find out if you are eligible. Only DWD can determine if you will qualify.

All claims based on work done in Wisconsin are filed through Wisconsin, even if you now live in another state.

IMPORTANT: You must file an initial claim application within seven days of the end of the calendar week in which you want to receive a UI benefit payment.

Information You Need to Apply

- A username and password (for filing online).
- A valid email address or mobile phone number.
- Your current address.
- Your social security number.
- Your Wisconsin driver license or identification number (if you have one).
- Your work history for the last 18 months, including:
 - Employers' business names.
 - Employers' addresses (including zip code).
 - Employers' phone number.
 - First and last dates of work with each employer.
 - Reason for no longer working with each employer.
- If you are not a U.S. citizen, your alien registration number, document number and expiration date.
- If you served in the military in the last 18 months, Form DD214.
- If you are a federal civilian employee, Form SF-50 or SF-8.
- If you are a union member, name and local number of your union hall.
- If you want UI benefit payments by direct deposit, your bank's routing number and your account number.

DWD is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need assistance with this information, please dial 7-1-1 for Wisconsin Relay Service. Please contact the Unemployment Insurance Division at (414) 435-7069 or toll-free at (844) 910-3661 to request information in an alternate format, including translated to another language.

How To Apply

1. Go to: **my.unemployment.wisconsin.gov**
2. Read and accept terms and conditions.
3. Create a username and password.
Note: When you authorize to use online services, you may be mailed an identity verification letter with a code that **must** be entered within seven days.
4. Log on to access your claimant portal.
5. Complete your initial claim application.

Apply online during these times:

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Sunday | 9:00 AM – Midnight |
| Monday – Friday | Available 24 Hours |
| Saturday | Midnight – 3:00 PM |

For help using online services or if you are unable to go online call (414) 435-7069 or toll-free (844) 910-3661 during business hours.

After You Complete Your Application:

- You will receive a claim confirmation and instructions form in the mail.
- The claimant handbook is online at **dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiiben/handbook**. You are responsible for knowing the information provided in this handbook.
- If you qualify for unemployment benefits, we will send you a notice with the amount of benefits you can receive.
- If you do not qualify for unemployment benefits, we will send you a notice that tells you why.
- If you are required to perform a weekly work search **or** if you work less than full-time (32 hours or more per week) you **must** register with Wisconsin Job Service at **JobCenterofWisconsin.com/ui** and **complete a résumé** within 14 days of the date you completed your application for UI benefits.

STATE OF WISCONSIN



Department of Workforce Development

dwd.wisconsin.gov/ui

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Eligibility FAQs

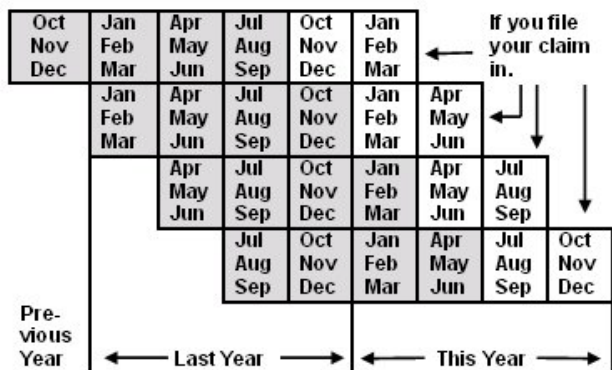
The following are **general questions and answers** relating to Unemployment Insurance (UI) eligibility. In order to determine your individual eligibility, you must file a claim.

➤ What is the weekly benefit rate (WBR)?

The weekly amount of unemployment benefits you are paid when you have no wages or other income during the week. It is 4% of the total high quarter wages from all covered employment in your base period. The minimum WBR is **\$54**, requiring high quarter earnings of \$1,350; and the maximum WBR is **\$370**, requiring high quarter earnings of \$9,250. If you do not have enough earnings for the minimum benefit rate, you do not qualify for unemployment benefits.

➤ What is a base period?

The base period is the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters before the week you file an initial claim application for a new benefit year. The wages paid during this period of time are used to determine if you have enough wages to qualify for a claim and to calculate how much you can be paid. The following chart will help you to understand how we determine the calendar quarters in your base period. The four shaded quarters in each row are the base period quarters for a claim started in the far right quarter of the same row.



➤ How long can I claim UI benefits?

You start a benefit year when you file a new initial claim application. A benefit year lasts 52 weeks. When one benefit year ends, the week that you file your next initial claim application will start a new benefit year. During the 52 weeks of each benefit year, there is a maximum amount of unemployment benefits you can be paid. This is called your “maximum benefit amount” (MBA). The MBA is the **lesser** of 26 times your WBR or 40% of your total base period wages from all covered employment.

Wages that you earn during a benefit year will not increase your MBA or your WBR for that benefit year.

Use your MBA as you would a checking account balance. As you are paid weekly benefits, simply subtract the amount you are paid from your MBA balance to know how much you can still be paid for that benefit year.

➤ When can I expect my first payment?

For every new benefit year, no benefits are payable for the first week you would otherwise be eligible for benefits. This is called the Waiting Week. After the required waiting period is served, benefits will be paid for other eligible weeks after they are claimed.

➤ Do I need to register with Wisconsin Job Service?

You must register with Wisconsin Job Service. You must be fully registered with Wisconsin Job Service within 14 days of filing your initial claim. Failure to fully register by the deadline will result in a suspension of benefits until the registration is complete. You will not be eligible for benefits for any week prior to your registration if your registration is not completed within 14 days of filing your initial claim. If you reside outside of Wisconsin you must report to the public employment office nearest your home and register by the deadline. Consult the Handbook for Claimants for additional information at dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/handbook.

➤ Do I need to look for work when I claim UI?

You are required to perform at least four work search actions for each week you want to be paid unemployment benefits, unless the department clearly tell you that your work search is “waived” and you do not have to look for work. When you file your initial claim you will be given your work search instructions. You must provide this information to the department when you file your weekly claim. Remember, if you do not make an adequate search for work, you may lose benefits. Apply for jobs you are willing to accept; don’t apply just to meet the work search requirements. **Do not stop looking for work unless the department tells you it is no longer needed.**

➤ Will my pension or Social Security affect my UI eligibility?

You must tell us if you have applied or are receiving any type of retirement payment. Retirement payments include periodic (such as monthly) and lump sum payments from retirement plans, 401(k)’s, 403(b)’s, and 457(b)’s, as well as Railroad Retirement

**Only UI can provide you with accurate information on the program.
Do not rely on answers from outside sources.**

The penalties for fraud and concealment are severe.

Benefits. Receipt of Social Security Retirement Benefits does not affect payment of UI. If all or part of your retirement payment was funded by one of your base period employers, your weekly unemployment payments must be reduced. If you roll the payment into another retirement system within 60 days of receiving it your unemployment payments will not be reduced unless you receive payments after the rollover. A voluntary retirement may be considered a quit and you may be disqualified.

➤ **If I am offered a job that pays less than I am currently making, do I have to take it?**

There isn't a general answer to that question because every case is different. If you refuse an offer of work, you must report it on your weekly claim. When you refuse a job, an investigation is conducted to determine if benefits are still payable. Wisconsin statutes provide for a "canvassing period" of up to six weeks after a job separation, during which time you may use the wages and skills of the last job as a basis to evaluate an offer of new work. If the skill is lower or the wage substantially less, benefits are normally not affected. After the canvassing period ends, you must be willing to accept work which offers reasonable wages, hours and other conditions for the type of work being offered, without regard to past wages or skills.

➤ **Can I go to school while I collect UI?**

You must tell us if you are a student while you file claims for unemployment benefits. Generally you must be able and available for full-time work. An investigation will be conducted to decide whether you are available for work. You may not have to be available for work while attending school if you are enrolled in a course of study that is considered "approved training." If you are in training approved or funded by TAA or WIOA dislocated workers programs, your training will be approved. If you are enrolled in a vocational program (diesel truck driving,

cosmetology, nursing aide, etc.) and you are a full-time student in this program (per the school) your training may be approved. If you are attending a university and taking day classes, you may not be eligible for benefits.

➤ **If I take a part-time job or another job that pays less than my prior job, will I still be able to collect UI benefits?**

Any job you take while collecting UI may reduce your weekly benefit payment. No benefits are payable for the week if you work, miss work and/or receive or will receive holiday, vacation, severance or sick pay in a week for hours equal to 32 or more. No benefits are payable if you earn wages or have holiday, vacation, severance or sick pay alone or combined with wages of more than \$500. If your total hours are less than 32 for the week and your total earnings are \$500 or less, the "partial wage formula" is used to compute partial weekly UI benefits as shown below:

1. Subtract \$30.00 from the gross income.
2. Multiply the remainder by .67 (67%).
3. Subtract this new amount (including the cents) from your WBR.
4. Round the remainder down to the nearest whole dollar. This is the amount of partial UI benefits payable for the week.

The smallest UI payment that we will pay is \$5.00, so if your calculation results in an amount less than \$5.00, no payment will be made.

➤ **What effect will severance or unused vacation pay have on my UI eligibility?**

It will depend on how your employer handles these payments. If your employer assigns this pay to the week(s) you are claiming, you must report the pay on your weekly claims. Call your employer if you are uncertain whether these types of pay have been assigned.

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