

Covid-19 Unemployment FAQs

What changes are in effect for unemployment insurance for those impacted by COVID-19?

The following flexibility and waivers to NC unemployment insurance have been made for COVID-19 response:

- allows unemployment benefits for layoffs due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- removes 1-week waiting period
- removes requirement to look for work
- allows remote application
- declares that employers will not be responsible for the payments

Under the guidance of North Carolina Executive Order No. 118, the North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Employment Security is working to ensure necessary unemployment insurance benefits are available to eligible North Carolinians whose employment is temporarily affected by the coronavirus disease COVID-19.

The order relates to individuals who, as a direct result of COVID-19, are separated from employment, have had their hours of employment reduced, or are prevented from working due to a medical condition caused by COVID-19 or due to communicable disease control measures.

The fastest and most efficient way to file a new claim for unemployment insurance benefits is to file online at www.des.nc.gov. If you're temporarily out of work or working reduced hours due to COVID-19, please select one of those two separation reasons when filing your claim.

An individual's eligibility, exact amount of benefits and duration of those benefits cannot be determined until after they file their claim.

Q. What if I am temporarily laid off work because business has slowed down as a result of COVID-19?

A. If you are laid off work temporarily or if your hours are reduced due to a business slowdown or a lack of demand as a result of COVID-19, you may be able to receive unemployment benefits. In order to determine eligibility, you must first apply for unemployment. If you're temporarily out of work or working reduced hours due to COVID-19, select one of those two separation reasons when filing your claim.

Q. What if my employer goes out of business as a result of COVID-19?

A. You may be eligible for unemployment benefits if you're laid off. If you're out of work due to COVID-19, indicate that while filing your claim.

Q. My employer has shut down operations temporarily because an employee is sick, and we have been directed to be isolated or in quarantine as a result of COVID-19. Am I eligible for unemployment benefits?

A. If you are not receiving payment from your employer, such as paid sick leave or paid time off, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits during this time. If you are laid off work temporarily or if your hours are reduced due to a business slowdown or a lack of demand as a result of COVID-19, you may be able to receive unemployment benefits. In order to determine eligibility, you must first apply for unemployment. If you're temporarily out of work or working reduced hours due to COVID-19, select one of those two separation reasons when filing your claim.

Q. What if I need to take time off work because I contract COVID-19?

A. The first and best option for employees who need to miss work due to illness is to use their employer-paid time off.

Q. What if I am directed by a medical professional or public health official to quarantine as a result of COVID-19, but I am not sick?

A. If your employer is not offering paid time off, you should apply for unemployment insurance. If you are laid off work temporarily or if your hours are reduced due to a business slowdown or a lack of demand as a result of COVID-19, you may be able to

receive unemployment benefits. In order to determine eligibility, you must first apply for unemployment. If you're temporarily out of work or working reduced hours due to COVID-19, please select one of those two separation reasons when filing your claim.

Q. I am a part-time employee. Am I eligible for unemployment?

A. Anyone can file for unemployment insurance. In order to determine eligibility, you must first apply for unemployment. If you're temporarily out of work or working reduced hours due to COVID-19, please select one of those two separation reasons when filing your claim.

Q. Do I qualify for unemployment benefits if I become seriously ill and I am forced to quit my job as a result of COVID-19?

A. When filing for unemployment insurance, an employee must provide information about their decision to leave the job. In order to determine eligibility, you must first apply for unemployment.

Q. How am I supposed to meet requirements related to my existing unemployment claim if I am in isolation or quarantine as a result of COVID-19?

A. Report your activities each week when you file your weekly certification. Further direction will be provided as it becomes available.

Q. Must I still attend a previously scheduled in-person appointment?

A. No, please contact the unit who scheduled the appointment or our Customer Call Center for other options to complete your appointment.

Q. Do I have to search for work while filing for unemployment?

A. Further direction will be provided as it becomes available.

Q. How do I file for unemployment insurance?

A. The fastest and most efficient way to file a new claim is to file online at des.nc.gov. If you don't have access to a computer, you may file over the phone by calling 888-737-0259.

Before you apply: Here is what you need

All Individuals

- Your Social Security Number.
- Details from your most recent employer about separation, vacation or severance pay you received, will receive, or are entitled to receive.
- Details regarding any retirement pay (gross monthly amount of pay along with proof).
- Your bank routing number and account number if you would like unemployment payments directly deposited into your bank account. If you do not select direct deposit, payment will be placed on a DES issued debit card.
- Your work history for the past two years (employer name as it appears on your check stub, employer's payroll and physical addresses, telephone number, employment dates, rate of pay and reason for separation from each employer).
 - ***If you're temporarily out of work or working reduced hours due to COVID-19, please select one of those two separation reasons when filing your claim.***

Non-Citizens

- Your Alien number and expiration date from your Employment Authorization Document.

Former Federal Employees

- Your SF-50 form, SF-8 form, pay stub(s) or W-2 (if you worked in federal employment within the past two years). If this information is unavailable, you may provide it later. Please proceed in filing your claim.

Former Military Personnel

- Your DD214, Member 4 Copy. If your DD214 is unavailable, you may provide it later. Please proceed in filing your claim.

Filing your unemployment application

Website: www.des.nc.gov

You can apply for benefits online 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you need help, contact our Customer Call Center at 888-737-0259, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

You must create an online account to file an application for Unemployment Insurance online. Your account also provides access to the Claimant Self-Service Portal, where you can get information about your claim at any time, such as:

- Claim status.
- Payment detail.
- Documents and determinations sent to you regarding your claim.
- Address, payment method, and tax withholding updates.

Create Your Online Account (To create your online account, you will need your Social Security Number and a valid email address)

1. Select Sign Up on the DES webpage
2. Enter your Social Security Number twice.
3. Select 'Next.'
4. You will then reach the 'Account Creation' page. Here you will:
 - Create a user name.
 - Enter your email address twice.
 - Create a pin number.
 - Enter your contact phone number.
 - Create a password.
5. Select 'Create Account.'
6. After your new account is created, an email will be sent to the email address you provided during your account creation. Select the link in the email to activate the account. The link is only valid for one hour. You can now Sign In to the website using your user name and password.

If you have questions or need assistance, contact the DES Customer Call Center at 888-737-0259.