

Unemployment Insurance

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What does it mean that the Unemployment Insurance Waiting Week is waived?

Under normal circumstances, the first week of an unemployment insurance claim does not receive payment. The Governor has opted to waive this if you were laid off due to COVID-19. This does not mean that you will receive benefits immediately. Kentucky pays unemployment benefits every two weeks.

Q: When will I get my benefits?

Benefits can only be paid after the week has passed (example: you cannot claim the week ending March 5th until March 6th or after). Benefits are paid every other week or also known as bi-weekly.

Q: What does it mean that the Job Search requirement is waived?

Under the COVID-19 state of emergency job search requirements are temporarily waived for all recipients of UI.

Q: When do I need to request my first payment?

Kentuckians affected by COVID-19 will receive payment for their first two weeks automatically after 13 days from the day the initial claim was filed. You will need to request your next payment by either by calling 1-877-369-5984 or www.kewes.ky.gov. You will receive further information for subsequent check requests via email after the first payment is processed.

Q: When filing my claim, is COVID-19 considered a natural disaster?

No. COVID-19, while being declared a state of emergency, is not a natural disaster.

Q: What happens if I can't return to work because of COVID-19?

You will continue to draw benefits until your employer begins operations. However, if you filed your claim and reported a date that you were returning to work, you will need to contact the UI Help Line to adjust/correct that information at 502-564-2900.

Q: How much can I expect as my weekly benefit amount?

You may estimate your weekly benefit amount by going to <http://apps.kcc.ky.gov/career/WuiCalculator.aspx>

- Enter your earnings into the appropriate quarters.
- You can log into your account 24 hours after submitting your claim, go to the Account Summary page and it will display your benefit amount.

NOTE: If you have wages from out of state or from employment with the Federal government, those wages may not be reflected immediately.

Q: I tried to create an account but it says my information already exists?

The system you are accessing may contain information back to 2003. If your attempt to register as a New User shows an error stating that social already exists in our system, you will need to click 'Cancel'. From the Log In screen, click 'Forgot' PIN. When prompted, enter your social security number and any name variation you may have used since 2003 (maiden, former married, shortened name i.e. John instead of Johnathan, etc.). Also note that if you have a suffix (Jr, Sr, etc), those fields are spacing and punctuation sensitive. Attempt with and without punctuation. If you are still unable to access the system, contact the UI Assistance line at (502) 564-2900, option 5, then option 6.

Q: Is there an extension for those who have exhausted a claim and aren't eligible to file a new one?

Yes. The recently approved federal CARES Act has extended the number of weeks from 26 to 39. Individuals whose UI eligibility expired on or after January 27, 2020 are eligible to apply for the 13 week extension.

Q: My name has changed/is incorrect. Can I change it myself?

You are not able to change your name yourself, as this requires legal documentation. To expedite this process, log into your account, go to Document Upload, and upload a PDF or photo format of 2 forms of verification of your current name (State issued ID, Driver's License, Social Security Card, Birth Certificate, Marriage/Divorce Decree, Passport or Military ID). Once the documentation has been uploaded, your file will be updated as soon as possible.

Q: What is available for the self-employed/contractors?

Unemployment Insurance benefits have been expanded due to COVID-19 to include groups that are typically not covered by UI:

- Self-employed
- Independent contractors
- Freelance workers
- Substitute teachers
- Childcare workers employed by religious-affiliated organizations and non-profits

It also includes people leaving employment because of COVID-19 due to:

- Reasonable risk of exposure (self-quarantine)
- Caring for a family member affected by COVID-19

Q: Will UI payments be increased by \$600 per week and when?

Yes. All weekly payments will increase by \$600. This will begin the week of March 29, 2020. Example, if my benefit payment was \$320 per week it will now be \$920 per week starting on March 29, 2020. You will receive two payments one for \$320 and one for \$600. Under the CARE Act, the \$600 payment is paid 100% by the federal government and will not be charged to employer accounts.

Q: I have worked part time over the past year and typically would not qualify, can I apply?

Yes. Under the CARES Act those who have worked part-time over the past year will now qualify for UI. You will get the weekly benefit amount you qualify plus the \$600. You will receive two payments. One for the weekly benefit amount and one for the weekly \$600.

Q: Will there be money on my debit card when I receive it in the mail?

No, you will receive your debit card before the money is deposited into your account. The money will go on the debit card when the claim is processed (Day 14 or 15). Please see the infographic on the process of a claim on kcc.ky.gov.

Q: What if employees want to stay home because they can make more money with UI plus \$600 from the federal government?

- During these unprecedented times, unemployment insurance (UI) benefits have been made available to groups that are not normally eligible for benefits.
- This includes individuals who have left their jobs because they have a reasonable fear that exposure to COVID-19 at their workplace will cause a negative impact on their health and they want to stay home.
- Despite these flexibilities, a central requirement of UI eligibility has always been and still is, that an individual is eligible for UI if they are separated from their job due to no fault of their own.
- If an employer provides reasonable accommodations for employees at their workplace or offers an option to telecommute, the employee must work if it is offered by the employer.
- The employer maintains the opportunity to protest any claim that is filed by an employee. If the employer and employee disagree about what is considered reasonable accommodations, those UI claims will have to be decided by a UI staff member on a case-by-case basis. Either side has the right to appeal that decision. For information about the appeals process, go to the Kentucky Career Center's website to the [Benefit Appeals](#) page.