

Illinois Unemployment Benefits FAQ

(Updated 09/18/20)



Who is Eligible for Illinois Unemployment Benefits?

You are eligible if you:

- **Have earned \$1,600.00 total during your “base period”;** \$440 must have been earned outside of your highest paid quarter.
 - Your “base period” consists of the four calendar quarters before a claim for benefits was filed.
 - If you worked part-time, you are eligible as long as you meet the income requirement.
 - If your hours were reduced, you are generally **not** eligible, but this may change.
- **Have become unemployed through no fault of your own.**
 - Temporary layoffs due to COVID-19 are eligible, if:
 - You are confined to your home due to a COVID-19 diagnosis, or because you need to care for a spouse, parent, or child who’s been diagnosed with COVID-19.
 - You have had to leave work due to a child’s school closure.
 - **not** if you left work voluntarily due to concern about COVID-19
 - **not** if you are receiving paid leave.
- **Are able and available to return to work.**
 - You must register with the state employment service at Illinois JobLink (www.IllinoisJobLink.com) to show your availability, unless you were temporarily laid off due to COVID-19—then you are not required to show your availability.
- **If you are a non-U.S. citizen, see Legal Aid Chicago’s “Unemployment Benefits in Illinois and non-U.S. citizens” flyer on our website at legalaidchicago.org/newsroom/in-the-news/covid-19/**

How are Benefits Calculated?

- A weekly benefit amount is determined by:
 - Adding the amount of the two highest earning quarters from a base period;
 - Taking 47% of the total received from adding the two highest earning quarters; and dividing the result by 26.
- The maximum individual weekly unemployment benefit is currently \$484.00.
- Please note that other financial factors may affect your weekly benefit amount.

What is the Duration of Unemployment Benefits?

- You may receive unemployment benefits for a total of **26 weeks**
- Federal relief currently provides for an **additional 13 weeks** of benefits resulting in 39 weeks of eligibility for Illinois residents who actively search for work. Flexibility will be provided where job searches are impacted by COVID-19. You do not need to apply separately for this benefit.



Call
312.341.1070

Monday to Friday
between 8AM and 4:30PM

Or



Apply Online

www.legalaidchicago.org

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How are Unemployment Claims Filed?

- Currently, you must submit your application using the online system at www2.illinois.gov/ides/individuals/unemploymentinsurance.
- You should be prepared to report past and current wages and to provide details on the reason for your unemployment.

What to do if a Claim is Denied?

- Appeal the denial of benefits within 30 days of the denial
- Forms and instructions are available through Illinois Legal Aid Online at Illinoislegalaid.org/legal-information/appealingides-unemployment-decision
- If you are interested in legal representation, apply at legalaidchicago.org.

What if I have already exhausted my benefits, or the type of work I perform does not normally qualify for benefits?

- Federal relief is currently providing benefits to workers who have exhausted their state benefits, or who do not normally qualify for state benefits.
- Examples of **who** is eligible:
 - independent contractors
 - freelancers
 - those who do not have a long-enough work history to qualify for state benefits
 - One of the following must apply to you:
 - You are partially or fully unemployed
 - You are unable and unavailable because of a COVID-19 diagnosis (your own, a household member, or someone you care for)
 - Your place of employment closed because of COVID-19
 - You are scheduled but unable to start new employment due to COVID-19.
- **What** you are entitled to:
 - Up to 39 weeks of benefits through December 31, 2020, which can be applied retroactively
 - Minimum benefit of at least one-half the state's average weekly benefit
- **How** to apply:
 - File an application for Illinois unemployment benefits and your eligibility for federal relief will be automatically considered



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