

Illinois Unemployment Benefits FAQs

(Updated 12/29/2020)

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” is the four calendar quarters (3-month periods) 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;
 - If you were temporarily laid off due to COVID-19 you 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;
 - You are **not** 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.

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.

Federal relief is currently providing an additional \$300 benefit per week through March 14, 2021.

You do not need to apply separately for this benefit. You are eligible even if it is a larger amount than your weekly salary.

- This benefit does not count as income for purposes of Medicaid or CHIP.

Please note that other financial factors may affect your weekly benefit amount.



Call

312.341.1070

Monday to Friday
between 8 AM and 4:30 PM

OR



Apply Online

www.legalaidchicago.org

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How long do unemployment benefits last?

You may receive unemployment benefits for a total of 26 weeks.

Federal relief currently provides for an additional 24 weeks of benefits resulting in 50 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.

How do I file an unemployment claim?

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 should I do if my claim is denied?

You must appeal the denial of benefits within 30 days of the finding of ineligibility.

Forms and instructions for appeal are available through Illinois Legal Aid Online at

Illinoislegalaid.org/legal-information/appealing-ides-unemployment-decision

If you are interested in legal representation, apply at legalaidthicago.org.

What if I have already exhausted my benefits, or the type of work I do doesn't 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. Through this program, you may be eligible for up to 50 weeks of benefits through March 14, 2021, which can be applied retroactively. Your minimum benefit if you qualify would be at least one-half the state's average weekly benefit, as well as the \$300 weekly benefit provided by the Federal Government through PUA.

Examples of who is eligible include:

- independent contractors, freelancers, and those who do not have a long-enough work history to qualify for state benefits.
- You must be partially or fully unemployed **or** unable and unavailable to work 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, or you are scheduled but unable to start a new job due to COVID-19.

If the terms above apply to you, you can submit your application using the online system at

www2.illinois.gov/ides/individuals/unemploymentinsurance.

Please note that the information contained in this flyer is not exhaustive, is not intended as legal advice, and cannot substitute for independent analysis and research in any specific case.



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