

# Unemployment Benefits and COVID-19



**Q: I was laid off or had my hours cut because of COVID-19, can I get unemployment benefits?**

A: Yes. You may qualify for state unemployment and/or CARES Act pandemic unemployment benefits (see below).

**Q: I have been advised not to work by a medical professional because of COVID-19, can I get unemployment?**

A: Yes, even if you have no symptoms.

**Q: Can I get unemployment if I am self-quarantining?**

A: No.

**Q: How do I apply?**

A: You can apply via:

- ODJFS website: <https://unemployment.ohio.gov/>. You can file 24 hours a day.
- By phone: 1-877-644-6562, TTY 1-614-387-8408.
  - Monday through Friday, 7 am to 7 pm
  - Saturday, 9 am to 5 pm
  - Sunday, 9 m to 1 pm

**Q: How will ODJFS know my unemployment is related to COVID-19?**

A: When you apply, you should put the

COVID-19 Mass Layoff Number on your application. The number is 2000180. If you did not use this number when you applied, you should NOT try to change your original application. ODJFS will still process your application. When you submit your weekly claims, put “COVID-19” in the activity box.

**Q: How quickly will ODJFS process my application?**

A: The State of Ohio is receiving a lot of applications. On average, it is taking 21 days to process an application.

**Q: How much money will I get?**

A: You will get half of your normal weekly wages. You may also get extra payments from the CARES Act (see below).

**Q: How long can I get unemployment?**

A: Ohio allows people to get up to 26 weeks of unemployment benefits. You may also get extra weeks from the CARES Act (see below).

**Q: What do I have to do each week to get my benefits?**

A: You must:

- File a weekly claim by phone or online.
- Be able and available for suitable work

**Q: Do I need to complete work-search activities?**

A: If your unemployment is COVID-19 related, you do not have to complete work-search activities.

**Q: Will I get paid benefits for my waiting week?**

A: Yes. ODJFS is working to update their system because they do not usually pay benefits for this week under the regular unemployment rules. You do not have to do anything to get this week paid. When the system is updated, ODJFS will automatically pay this week to everyone. You do not have to appeal the non-payment of your waiting week.



## **Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act and Unemployment**

**Q: What is the CARES Act?**

A: Congress passed the CARES Act to address the COVID-19 pandemic. It changes many unemployment rules. People will get extra payments, extra weeks, and many more people should qualify to get unemployment benefits. The new unemployment programs are called Pandemic Unemployment Compensation.

**Q: How will the CARES Act effect my unemployment benefits?**

- You may get an extra \$600 per week on top of your regular unemployment benefits
- You may get 13 more weeks eligibility for unemployment benefits
- You may qualify for unemployment even if you did not qualify under Ohio rules

**Q: Do I need to turn in a separate application to get the pandemic unemployment benefits under the the CARES Act?**

A: It depends.

You do not need to submit a separate application to get the additional \$600.00 in weekly benefits. These will be paid automatically with your regular weekly unemployment benefits. There is a separate application for CARES Act benefits if you do not qualify for unemployment under Ohio Law. This new program is called Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). You can get more information on PUA and apply at

<https://unemploymenthelp.ohio.gov/expandedeligibility/>

**Q: When will I see the extra \$600 in my unemployment check?**

A: If you are approved for regular Ohio unemployment benefits, you should get the extra \$600 automatically with your regular weekly benefit. There had been a delay in these payments, but most people are now getting them as soon as they are approved for unemployment benefits. People who are approved for PUA will also be eligible to get the extra \$600 weekly payment.

**Q: I am self-employed, an independent contractor, or a gig worker. Will I qualify for unemployment under the CARES Act? When should I apply?**

A: You may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). You can get more information on PUA and apply at <https://unemploymenthelp.ohio.gov/expandedeligibility/>

**Q: I was not approved for Ohio unemployment benefits because ODJFS said I did not have enough weeks of work, or I did not earn a high enough weekly wage. Will I be able to get any unemployment benefits?**

A: You may qualify for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). You can get more information on PUA and apply at <https://unemploymenthelp.ohio.gov/expandedeligibility/>.

**Q: \$600.00 is more than I make working in a week. Can I quit my job and get unemployment?**

A: No. If you quit your job, you will not qualify for any unemployment.

**Q: My employer has called me back to work, do I have to return?**

A: This is a hard question to answer without knowing details about your work and your personal situation. Some people who do not return to work when their employer re-opens will lose their unemployment benefits. Others will have good cause to turn down the offer of work. If you would like to talk to someone about your specific case, please call Legal Aid at 513-241-9400 and ask to be screened for an unemployment case.

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If you have questions or need legal assistance, please call the  
Legal Aid line at **(513) 241-9400**  
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