



School for Workers
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Wisconsin Unemployment Insurance

Legal Rights for Workers During COVID-19*

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Unemployment Insurance

*UW-Madison School for Workers is working to analyze and summarize legal developments during the COVID-19 crises. We anticipate that regulations may further define these rights and acknowledge that details continue to change quickly.

About School for Workers

School for Workers advances the empowerment of working people, labor organizations, and community partners through teaching, research, and service. Learn more at schoolforworkers.wisc.edu.

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Available Unemployment Insurance Programs

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (the CARES Act) created three new Unemployment Insurance Programs: Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation, and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.

Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

Pandemic Unemployment Compensation provides an additional \$600 per week to unemployed workers, in addition to regular unemployment benefits. Wisconsin started these payments the week of April 29, 2020 and are available through July 31, 2020. No additional action other than applying for unemployment compensation is necessary.

Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation

Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation provides an additional 13 weeks of unemployment benefits after regular state benefits end. In Wisconsin, this means that workers can receive an additional 13 weeks of benefits after exhausting the state maximum of 26 weeks. Pursuant to regulation by the U.S. Department Of Labor, Wisconsin is now waiving the one-week waiting period.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) provides emergency unemployment assistance to workers who are not normally eligible for unemployment benefits such as independent contractors, freelancers, and workers who do not have a long enough work history to qualify for regular unemployment benefits. Under the CARES Act, these workers are now entitled to up to 39 weeks of unemployment benefits. Wisconsin is now taking applications for these PUA benefits and should be available to eligible workers through December 31, 2020.

Other important PUA details:

- If an employer is shut down because of COVID-19, workers are eligible for unemployment insurance benefits even if they have not been told they are furloughed or laid off.
- If an employee is on mandatory furlough, they are eligible for unemployment benefits.
- In Wisconsin, if an employee is in mandatory quarantine pursuant to local, state, federal requirements or guidance because of COVID-19 symptoms but feel they can work, they may be eligible for unemployment benefits. Workers who are ill or are in self-quarantine are not eligible for unemployment benefits.
- If hours are reduced but workers are still working, workers can receive unemployment benefits for the hours no longer available.
- There is no work search requirement during the COVID-19 Emergency Order, but workers may be required to register with the [Job Center of Wisconsin](#).
- Wisconsin unemployment insurance benefits are available to U.S. citizens AND legal residents.

Applying for Unemployment Insurance in Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) prefers that workers apply for benefits online, at <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/faqs/apply.htm>. Workers can also call the DWD at 608-266-3131.

To apply, you will need:

- A valid email or mobile phone number
- A valid social security number or non-citizen registration numbers, document number and expiration date
- Wisconsin driver's license or identification numbers
- Work history for the last 18 months, including employers' business name, address, phone number, first and last date of work, and reason no longer with that employer
- Form DD-214 if you served in the military in the last 18 months
- Form SF-50 or SF-8 if you are a federal employee
- Current address
- Name and local number of your union hall

Receiving Unemployment Insurance in Wisconsin

The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD) prefers that workers seek information online <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/faqs>, which includes some information in Spanish and Hmong as well as English. Workers can also call the DWD at 608-266-3131.

Calculation of Benefits

Benefits are based upon the first four of the last completed calendar quarters. Weekly benefits are 4% of the total high quarter wages from all covered employment, with a minimum of \$54 a week based on high quarter earnings of \$1,350 and the maximum of \$370 per week, from high quarter earnings of \$9,250.

Waiting Period

Wisconsin no longer has a one-week waiting period following the last day of work. Workers who filed in the week of March 15, 2020 or later and were required to wait one week should have or will be receiving payments for the first week by direct deposit or a Visa pre-paid debit card.

Weekly Claim Certification

Within 14 days of the last day of work prior to filing, each week workers must file a weekly claim certification that applies to the specific calendar week. Workers need to answer questions regarding whether they are receiving any pay from wages, sick pay, vacation pay, bonus pay, holiday pay, severance or other sources of income.

Work Search

Normally you must provide information regarding your job search. This requirement is relaxed during COVID-19 but workers may still need to register with the [Job Center of Wisconsin](#).

Denial of Benefits

Typically, workers must be ready, willing, and able to work. Workers do not receive benefits when they quit, are fired for misconduct, or refuses to work. There are a few additional reasons posted on <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/handbook>.



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COVID-19
WORKER INFO