

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

How to Apply and Eligibility Frequently Asked Questions

How to Apply

Remember: Your claim begins the week you apply. To avoid any loss of benefits, apply the first week you are unemployed. Do not wait until the week is over.

An application must be made each time you want to start receiving benefits. All claims based on work done in Wisconsin are filed either on the Internet or by telephone, even if you now live in another state.

To complete your application you will need:

- Your Social Security Number.
Why we need your Social Security Number:
The federal Social Security Act requires you to give us your social security number. It will be used to verify your identity and to determine your eligibility. If you do not provide your social security number, we cannot take your claim.
- A Personal Identification Number (PIN).
Your PIN is a 4-digit number you make up before you apply and it helps to identify you. The same PIN must be used for all on-line and telephone unemployment services. Choose a PIN you will remember. If you forget your PIN or want to change it, call one of the initial claim application telephone numbers. **DO NOT TELL YOUR PIN TO ANYONE!**
- Your Wisconsin Driver's License Number, if you have one.
- The names of everyone for whom you worked in the past 18 months. For each employer you will also need a full address (including zip code), a telephone number, the reason you are no longer working there, and your first and last dates of work.
- Your Alien Registration Number, the document number from which the number is obtained, and the expiration date on that document (if you are not a U.S. citizen).
- The name and local number of your union hall, if you are a union member.

APPLY ON-LINE at:

my.unemployment.wisconsin.gov

APPLY BY TELEPHONE by calling:

Madison 608-232-0678
Milwaukee..... 414-438-7700
Toll Free 1-800-822-5246
TTY (toll free)..... 1-888-393-8914
(for deaf, hard-of-hearing and speech-impaired callers)

A recorded voice will answer your call. The voice will ask you questions and tell you what numbers to press to give your answers.

You must press 1 to apply for benefits. After you have answered all the questions, one of our staff will help you finish.

APPLY DURING THESE TIMES:

Applications can be started:

Sunday 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM
Monday-Friday..... 6:00 AM – 7:00 PM
Saturday 9:00 AM – 2:30 PM

Claims specialists are available:

Monday-Friday..... 7:45 AM – 4:30 PM

After you file your new application:

- You will receive a claim confirmation form and a handbook in the mail.
- If you qualify for unemployment benefits, we will send you a notice telling you the amount of benefits you can receive.
- If you do not qualify for unemployment benefits, we will send you a notice that tells you why.

Have a Question? Need help?

Call between 7:45 AM and 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday to speak to one of our staff:

Madison 608-232-0824
Milwaukee..... 414-438-7713
Toll Free 1-800-494-4944

<http://unemployment.wisconsin.gov>

DWD is an equal opportunity employer and service provider. If you have a disability and need to access this information in an alternate format, or need it translated to another language, please call Toll Free 1-800-494-4944 or TTY 1-888-393-8914.

STATE OF WISCONSIN



Department of Workforce Development

Eligibility FAQs

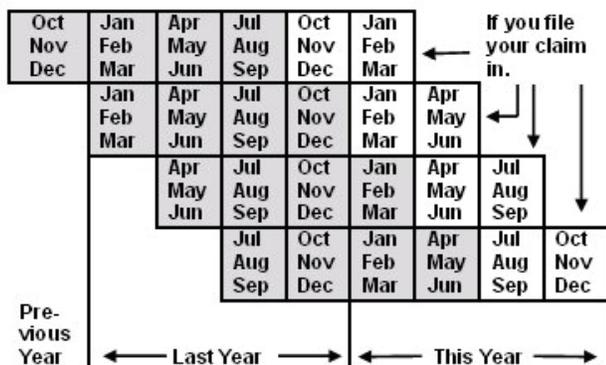
The following are **general questions and answers** relating to Unemployment Insurance (UI) eligibility. In order to determine your individual eligibility, you must file a claim.

➤ What is the weekly benefit rate (WBR)?

The weekly amount of unemployment benefits you are paid when you have no wages or other income during the week. It is 4% of the total high quarter wages from all covered employment in your base period. The minimum WBR is **\$54**, requiring high quarter earnings of \$1,350; and the maximum WBR is **\$363**, requiring high quarter earnings of \$9,075. If you do not have enough earnings for the minimum benefit rate, you do not qualify unemployment benefits.

➤ What is a base period?

The base period is the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters before the week you file an initial claim application for a new benefit year. The wages paid during this period of time are used to determine if you have enough wages to qualify for a claim and to calculate how much you can be paid. The following chart will help you to understand how we determine the calendar quarters in your base period. The four shaded quarters in each row are the base period quarters for a claim started in the far right quarter of the same row.



Example: A claim started in May has a base period of all four quarters of the previous calendar year.

Example: A claim started in August has a base period that includes the last three quarters of the previous calendar year and the first quarter of the current calendar year.

➤ How long can I claim UI benefits?

You start a benefit year when you file a new initial claim application. A benefit year lasts 52

weeks. When one benefit year ends, the week that you file your next initial claim application will start a new benefit year. During the 52 weeks of each benefit year, there is a maximum amount of unemployment benefits you can be paid. This is called your “maximum benefit amount” (MBA). The MBA is the **lesser** of 26 times your WBR or 40% of your total base period wages from all covered employment. Wages that you earn during a benefit year will not increase your MBA or your WBR for that benefit year.

Use your MBA as you would a checking account balance. As you are paid weekly benefits, simply subtract the amount you are paid from your MBA balance to know how much you can still be paid for that benefit year.

➤ When can I expect my first payment?

Effective January 1, 2012 Wisconsin has a one week waiting period for Unemployment Insurance benefits. For every new benefit year, no benefits are payable for the first week you would otherwise be eligible for benefits. After the required waiting period is served benefits will be paid for other eligible weeks after they are claimed.

➤ Will my pension or Social Security affect my UI eligibility?

You must tell us if you have applied or are receiving any type of retirement payment. Retirement payments include periodic (such as monthly) and lump sum payments from retirement plans, 401(k)'s, 403(b)'s, and 457(b)'s. Social Security Benefits are not treated as a retirement payment. If all or part of your retirement payment was funded by one of your base period employers, your weekly unemployment payments must be reduced. If you roll the payment into another retirement system within 60 days of receiving it your unemployment payments will not be reduced unless you receive payments after the rollover. A voluntary retirement may be considered a quit and you may be disqualified.

➤ Do I need to look for work when I claim UI?

You must look for work each week unless the department clearly tells you that your work search is “waived” and that you do not have to look for work. When you file your initial claim you will be given your work search instructions.

You must contact four employers every week if you are told that you have to look for work.

Remember, if you do not make an adequate search for work, you may lose benefits. Apply for jobs you are willing to accept; don't apply just to meet the work search requirements. **Do not stop looking for work unless the department tells you it is no longer needed.**

➤ **Do I need to register with Wisconsin Job Service?**

In addition to looking for work, you must register with Wisconsin Job Service. You must be fully registered with Wisconsin Job Service within 14 days of filing your initial claim. Failure to fully register by the deadline will result in a suspension of benefits until the registration is complete. You will not be eligible for benefits for any week prior to your registration if your registration is not completed within 14 days of filing your initial claim. If you reside outside of Wisconsin you must report to the public employment office nearest your home and register by the deadline. Consult the claimant handbook for additional information at <http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/handbook>.

➤ **If I am offered a job that pays less than I am currently making, do I have to take it?**

There isn't a general answer to that question because every case is different. If you refuse an offer of work, you must report it on your weekly claim. When you refuse a job, an investigation is conducted to determine if benefits are still payable. Wisconsin statutes provide for a "canvassing period" of up to six weeks after a job separation, during which time you may use the wages and skills of the last job as a basis to evaluate an offer of new work. If the skill is lower or the wage substantially less, benefits are normally not affected. After the canvassing period ends, you must be willing to accept work which offers reasonable wages, hours and other conditions for the type of work being offered, without regard to past wages or skills.

➤ **Can I go to school while I collect UI?**

You must tell us if you are a student while you file claims for unemployment benefits. Generally you must be able and available for full time work. An investigation will be conducted to decide whether you are available for work. You may not have to be available for work while attending

school if you are enrolled in a course of study that is considered "approved training." If you are in training approved or funded by TAA or WIA dislocated workers programs, your training will be approved. If you are enrolled in a vocational program (diesel truck driving, cosmetology, nursing aide, etc.) and you are a full-time student in this program (per the school) your training may be approved. If you are attending a university and taking day classes, you may not be eligible for benefits. If you take an evening course or two there may be no effect on benefit eligibility.

➤ **If I take a part-time job or another job that pays less than my prior job, will I still be able to collect UI benefits?**

Any job you take while collecting UI may reduce your weekly benefit payment. No benefits are payable for the week if you work, miss work and/or receive or will receive holiday, vacation, severance or sick pay in a week for hours equal to 32 or more. No benefits are payable if you earn wages or have holiday, vacation, severance or sick pay alone or combined with wages of more than \$500. If your total hours are less than 32 for the week and your total earnings are \$500 or less, the "partial wage formula" used to compute partial weekly UI benefits is shown below:

1. Subtract \$30.00 from the gross income.
2. Multiply the remainder by .67 (67%).
3. Subtract this new amount (including the cents) from your WBR.
4. Round the remainder down to the nearest whole dollar. This is the amount of partial UI benefits payable for the week.

The smallest UI payment that we will pay is \$5.00, so if your calculation results in an amount less than \$5.00, no payment will be made.

➤ **What effect will severance or unused vacation pay have on my UI eligibility?**

It will depend on how your employer handles these payments. If your employer assigns this pay to the week(s) you are claiming, you must report the pay on your weekly claims. Call your employer if you are uncertain whether these types of pay have been assigned.

**Only UI can provide you with accurate information on the program.
Do not rely on answers from outside sources.**

The penalties for fraud and concealment are severe.