



Key Points

- This process is run by the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC).
- Calls and online activity have increased, and the VEC is difficult to reach.
- Employees who plan to file should wait until they are no longer coding leave.
- If the claim information entered does not match the weeks they have been paid for in FOCUS, it will delay the processing of their claim and their payment.
- Employees who receive overpayments will have to reimburse the VEC.
- Employees are asked about alternate job placement when they apply for unemployment. This includes the county's Job Reassignment Program.
- The county will continue to cover employee benefits, with the employee's contributions going into an arrears status that will be collected through the system when they begin to code working hours.

Related Links and Materials

- [Unemployment FAQs](#)
- [Virginia Employment Commission \(VEC\)](#)
- [VEC COVID-19 Resources](#)
- [VIDEO: How to file unemployment claims](#)
- [File an initial or weekly/continued claim](#)

Unemployment Information

Eligibility

1. In order to file for Unemployment Insurance (UI) you must have been separated from your employer or have had your hours reduced.
2. Employees do not have to be terminated in the system to apply for unemployment. The Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) has a category for reduction of hours, and employees do not have to be terminated to be eligible.
3. Employees who plan to file should wait until they are no longer coding leave (unless you are coding leave to cover your benefit deductions). Dates of payments entered need to match FOCUS. If the claim information does not match the weeks they have been paid for, it will delay the processing of their claim and their payment. Keep in mind that employees may not have been physically working since March 13, but they have been paid "Administrative Leave – Pandemic" or used other leave and this constitutes paid work.
4. Employees should go online and apply for unemployment - the website is <https://www.vec.virginia.gov>
 - a. Employees are reminded to be patient due to the higher than normal volume of claims the VEC is receiving.
5. An employee does not have to exhaust all accrued leave to be eligible to apply for unemployment. They must make sure the reason stated on their form is lack of work or reduction in hours.
6. The filing process takes approximately 45 minutes to complete. Incomplete applications will not be processed and will be "greyed out" so enough time should be allowed to complete the process.

- Beginning with claims effective March 15, 2020, Governor Northam has directed **that the one week waiting period and the requirement to conduct a weekly job search both be suspended** for those receiving unemployment insurance benefits. Due to this increase in demand, VEC may be paying out benefits before the claims have been verified.
- Claimants are required to report the refusal of any job offers and be prepared to substantiate the reason why the offer was rejected
 - Employees are asked about alternate job placement when they apply for unemployment.

Guide: Unemployment Insurance and VEC

Receiving Payment

- Employees must select a method of payment: VA Debit Card or Direct Deposit
- If direct deposit is selected, the routing and account number information must be provided

Taxation

- Employees must indicate that they want federal taxes withheld from their unemployment payment or they will not be withheld. Federal withholdings are 10% of the gross benefit payment.
- The VEC will send a Form 1099G at the end of the year detailing the benefits received plus any federal tax withholdings elected. Employees must notify the VEC of any address changes so that the 1099G is sent to the correct address.

Employees must report all wages and paid leave they receive while collecting unemployment insurance.

- Fairfax County Government submits quarterly wage information to the VEC so the VEC will be able to compare any wages received.
- Employees can supplement their income by working a part-time job while receiving unemployment insurance, but this income must be reported including the employer's name, address, phone number and weekly amount received.
 - The VEC determines the maximum allowable hours that can be worked for the employee to remain eligible.
- Employees who provide false information are subject to legal action with fines from \$20 to \$100 and imprisonment up to 30 days and repayment of the false benefits received. Employees who are found guilty of providing false information will be ineligible to receive benefits for at least 52 weeks.
- Some employees may want to use personal leave to cover their County benefits. Will they be denied unemployment insurance for doing so?
 - No, but the benefit amount may be reduced.
- Employees who are working a few hours must report these hours and be sure to notify VEC of any earnings even if on a part-time basis.

Ending Benefits

- Once employees start to earn more than the weekly unemployment benefit, the unemployment benefits must cease. They must simply report the return to full time status and stop making the weekly call or online filing for benefits.
- It is illegal to claim benefits while employed full-time. The County is a reimbursable employer and we are billed dollar for dollar for any benefits paid. These overpaid funds must be corrected by the VEC and they will determine the best way to accomplish the repayment.