

DC Unemployment Insurance (UI) Basics For COVID-19 Emergency

Am I eligible for Unemployment Insurance?

I received a layoff notice or significant reduction of work hours from my DC-based employer.

YES, you should apply for UI. Unemployment insurance is the best way to give you cash assistance, and your employer has been paying into the UI Trust Fund for this reason.

I work as a contractor for a DC-based business. I receive a 1099.

At this time, independent contractors are **NOT ELIGIBLE** for UI. This might change pending further action by the federal government. Right now, DC is setting up a grant fund to help DC-based small businesses and independent contractors. More information coming soon at coronavirus.dc.gov.

I have been diagnosed with COVID-19, I have had contact with a COVID-19 case, I have been ordered to quarantine/isolate or I have decided to self-quarantine/isolate based on recommendation from doctor and that has led to temporary separation from work.

YES, you should apply for UI. Emergency actions taken by the DC Council have expanded both UI eligibility and job protections under the District's Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) for these COVID-19 related circumstances.

I earn money through gig work, such as Pared, Lyft, and Uber.

At this time, gig workers are **NOT ELIGIBLE** for UI. Again, this might change pending federal government action. Right now, DC is setting up a grant fund to help DC residents who are independent contractors. More information coming soon at coronavirus.dc.gov.

How does UI work?

How much money will I receive and for how long?

The maximum weekly benefit is **\$444 a week**. If you earn less than approximately \$45,000 a year, your benefit is about half of your average weekly earnings over the last year. Right now, the benefit lasts up to 26 weeks, but in other difficult economic times it has been extended.

When will I start getting my benefits?

UI cash assistance is given through direct **deposit or a benefit card** (like a debit card). Efforts are being made to speed process, but benefits will likely start at least 15 days after you apply.

Do I need to prove I am looking for work or be available for work? And can I earn money while getting UI?

DC has **waived the work search and work availability requirements** temporarily. There are restrictions on how much you can earn to still qualify for UI.

How do I apply?

Best to use desktop or laptop computer to fill out application online at dcnetworks.org. Application most compatible with Internet Explorer browser and **cannot be filed with a cell phone**. If you don't have computer and internet access, call **202-724-7000**.

What documents/information do I need when applying?

- Name, address, phone number of employer
- Dates of employment
- Social Security Number
- If not U.S. citizen, alien registration number
- If ex-military, DD-214
- If former federal employee, Standard Form 8 or 50
- Any severance pay from your employer
- Any pension benefit

Who can I talk to about my rights?

Washington Lawyers' Committee Workers' Rights Clinic
202-319-1000

Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia
202-628-1161

Apply for UI online at dcnetworks.org