

Hello, my name is Bridgette Davis. I was employed as a contract attorney in DC until May 19, 2019 when I was laid off. As a contract attorney, I work temporary projects, so I am very familiar with the unemployment process. I attempted to file initial claims online starting May 23, 2019. I tried to file online and by phone from May 23 through July 19. I was able to access the site, input my information, my social security number, but every time I got a screen that said

“Your information has been received. Due to the extremely high volume of cases currently being filed, we ask that you please resubmit your request on the following business day after 1:00pm EST. If your claim still does not process, please contact us during normal business hours at 202-698-5111.”

I followed those instructions. I resubmitted my claim every single day. I called the number numerous times. Every time I called; I did not get through. I got a message saying they could not answer my call and then the call disconnected. On one day I called 33 times.

I kept trying because I trusted the message I got online that said that my “information had been received”. I believed there was a record of my entering information online. When I finally got through via phone, on July 19, I spoke with a claims person who helped me file my claim. Although I told him more than once that I was out of work since May 19, and he told me that he would make my claim begin on May 19, when I saw the claim online and the determination, it began on July 19.

I did not receive benefits for weeks after that, however. The site said there was an issue. After calling several times and waiting on hold for hours each time, I was told I had wages in Virginia. I haven’t worked in Virginia in more than 10 years. I sent an email stating I did not want to have a combined claim and only wanted to claim DC wages. I sent this email to the fact-finding email address on August 5. I still received nothing.

I kept calling the number to get my benefits started. I had to wait on hold two to three hours. When I got through, I told the claims worker that I needed to get my benefits. I also told the workers that I was concerned that the claim was not back dated to the date I was laid off. I was told by one worker that she “could not guarantee” that I would ever receive benefits for the back weeks because I “did not complete my filing”. I told her I was prevented from completing the filing by their system. She told me it didn’t matter, that since I didn’t get it done, I would probably not be paid.

This looked like a scam and a set up at this point. It started to sound like that office did not have the intention to pay claims at all and planned to make people wait so long they gave up. I decided to take the paper claim forms that I received in the mail for the weeks I already filed, make copies, change the dates and file paper claims for the back weeks. I mailed them, scanned them and emailed them to DOES. I got no response.

I contacted the DC Legal Aid office for help at that time. After giving them my evidence, which consisted of screenshots of every day that I filed online, a screenshot of the message telling me to try again, screenshots from my phone of every time that I called and copies of my paper filings. They told me that they sent all of my evidence to DOES and asked that my case be escalated. After contacting them, within a few days, I began to receive the benefits from July forward. I was told that no one was getting their back claims. Again, I got the impression that DOES intended to avoid paying any of the back claims even

though the lack of proper filing was caused by their own deficiencies. I kept contacting the legal aid office.

I finally got a call on September 8, from a supervisor. Mr. Andre Chisolm, who wanted to know “why I thought I should receive back benefits.” I asked him if he had received my evidence. He had not. I told him I would send him my extensive evidence, including the email laying me off. He said that because the office was having many problems, he “might” be able to get me benefits for the month of June and possibly the rest later. This sounded shady to me. It sounded like someone trying to make a payment plan with me while trying to get out of paying. I have heard nothing since.

When I began to prepare this statement, I looked online at my profile and it had been changed. My monetary determination had been reduced to zero. The benefits for each week that I already received now had a notation stating that my claim is “monetarily ineligible”. I am assuming DC intends to claw back the benefits they paid. I don’t know why this change was made but it feels retaliatory for my participation in this hearing. I do know that if I do not receive the back benefits owed to me, I will be suing the city. I am a lawyer with a license in DC, I have precise and extensive evidence to support my claim and I have nothing better to do.

You are logged in as
BRIDGETTE DAVIS
 xxx-xx-5120

Payment History

Date: 09/15/2020
 Time: 9:17:04 PM
 Day: Tuesday

This page displays information about the weeks for which the District of Columbia has received claim forms from you

Weeks Submitted Awaiting Processing

Week Ending	Submitted Date/Time	Notes
None		

Weeks Processed

(07/08)

Week Ending (Fecha en que termina la semana reclamada)	Paid Date (Fecha de pago)	Paid Amount (Cantidad pagada)	Payment Method (Método de pago)	Filing Method (Método de someter solicitud)	Notes (Notas)
09/05/2020	09/08/2020	\$444.00	Direct Deposit	Internet	Your claim has been received as of 9/6/2020 is not payable because your claim remains monetarily ineligible.
08/29/2020	08/31/2020	\$444.00	Direct Deposit	Internet	Your claim has been received as of 8/31/2020 is not payable because your claim remains monetarily ineligible.
08/22/2020	08/24/2020	\$444.00	Direct Deposit	Internet	Your claim has been received as of 8/23/2020 is not payable because your claim remains monetarily ineligible.
08/15/2020	08/24/2020	\$444.00	Direct Deposit	Internet	Your claim has been received as of 8/16/2020 is not payable because your claim remains monetarily ineligible.
08/08/2020	08/24/2020	\$444.00	Direct Deposit	Internet	Your claim has been received as of 8/9/2020 is not payable because your claim remains monetarily ineligible.
08/01/2020	08/24/2020	\$444.00	Direct Deposit	Internet	Your claim has been received as of 8/4/2020 is not payable because your claim remains monetarily ineligible.
07/25/2020	08/24/2020	\$1,044.00	Direct Deposit	Internet	Your claim has been received as of 7/26/2020 is not payable because your claim remains monetarily ineligible.