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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
LANSING

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COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Unemployment Benefits Questions and Answers

Q1. How do I apply for unemployment insurance benefits?

The fastest and preferred method is to file for unemployment insurance benefits **online** using the Michigan Web Account Manager (MiWAM) at michigan.gov/uia. MiWAM is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. You must first sign in to MILogin to access or create a MiWAM account. For step by step instructions, view the [MiWAM Toolkit for Claimants](#). You may also file by phone at 1-866-500-0017. If you are hearing impaired, TTY service is available at 1-866-366-0004.

You will need to create a new MILogin for Citizens account before you can create or access your MiWAM account. If you have already created a MILogin account through another department, you simply need to log in and link your MiWAM account before you can access your MiWAM account. You will need to use your personal email address for MILogin for Citizens.

Q2. How much will I be paid if I qualify for unemployment benefits?

A. The Unemployment Insurance Agency will look at wages you have earned over the last 18 months in calculating your weekly benefit amount. The maximum weekly amount anyone can receive is \$362 per week for up to 26 weeks; For more information on how benefits are calculated, refer to pages 9 and 10 in our [Handbook for Unemployed Workers](#).

Q3. What information will I need to apply for benefits?

A. You will need:

- Social security number,
- Your state issued driver's license or ID card number
- The names and addresses of employers you worked for during the past 18 months, along with your quarterly gross earnings
- The dates (first and last day of employment) with each employer.
- Your most recent employer's Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) account number or Federal ID number. Providing the account number may speed up the processing of your claim. The employer's Federal ID number appears on your annual W-2 form).
- If you are not a U.S. citizen or national, you will need your Alien Registration number and the expiration date of your work authorization.

LEO is an equal opportunity employer/program.

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For more information about filing for benefits, view [Fact Sheet 160, Claiming Unemployment Benefits in Michigan](#).

Q4. If I file for unemployment insurance benefits, when will it become effective and when will I receive my first payment?

A. Individuals should expect their first payment about three weeks after they file their claim. Subsequent payments are released every two weeks after the individual certifies.

An unemployment insurance claim is effective the week in which it is filed. After filing a claim, a person will need to certify for benefits. A claimant must certify (report) every two weeks that they are eligible for benefits. After the first certification (which is done during the third week of unemployment) they will receive their payment in about 3-5 days. Certification can be done using a person's MIWAM account and/or by phone by MARVIN.

Q5. What does it mean to "certify"? How often do I need to do it?

A. To continue to receive unemployment benefits, a person must "certify" also referred to as "report" every other week that they are eligible. You can certify online with MiWAM at michigan.gov/uia 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or by phone at 1-866-638-3993 Monday - Saturday; 8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Q6. Do I need to register for work after I have filed a claim for unemployment insurance benefits?

A. No. Claimants should **not** report to a Michigan Works! Agency to register for work. The standard work registration requirement has been **suspended**.

Q7. What is the unemployment insurance impact on workers who receive tips as part of their earnings?

A. The amount of wages earned with employers prior to filing a claim are used to establish eligibility. It does not matter if the employment was full-time or part-time or paid on commission or if the wages paid were in the form of salary, hourly or tips.

Q8. Are unemployment benefits taxable?

A. Yes. You will receive a 1099-G. You have the option to have taxes withheld.

Q9. How will I be paid?

A. The preferred way is by direct deposit to your bank or credit union account. You may also choose to receive benefits by UIA debit card (issued by Bank of America).

Q10: I have a previous claim for benefits starting before 3/15/20, do I get more weeks of benefits on this claim?

A. For all current **active claims** (claims with weeks left to be paid regardless of the benefit year end date), and all claims filed between 3/15/2020 – 4/18/2020, the maximum number of weeks of benefits allowed is 26 weeks. If you have a claim that ended before to 03/15/2020, you will not receive additional benefits.

Q11. If weeks of unemployment have already been paid due to a previous layoff, will that affect eligible weeks on a new claim?

A. No. Each time you file a new claim, your unemployment benefit entitlement is established. Weeks left over from a previous claim do not carry over to a new claim.

Q12. Can a person work part-time and still collect UI benefits?

A. Yes. If your hours have been reduced, you should apply for benefits. If you are working part-time and collecting unemployment, make sure to report your earnings when claiming the week in benefits. Unemployment benefits are reduced based upon your earnings you receive when working part-time.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Q13. What if I need to take time off work because I contract COVID-19?

A. Workers who are sick, quarantined, or immunocompromised and who do not have access to paid family and medical leave or are laid off may be eligible for unemployment benefits.

Q14. If I become seriously ill and I am forced to quit my job as a result of COVID-19, will I qualify for unemployment benefits?

A. If you are unable to work because you are ill as a result of COVID-19, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits.

Q15. What if I have to care for someone who has Coronavirus? Can I get unemployment benefits?

A. If you have to leave your job because you are caring for an ill or quarantined family member, caring for someone with a confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, or have a family care responsibility as a result of a government directive, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits.

Q16. What if I am asked by a medical professional or public health official to quarantine as a result of COVID-19, but I am not sick?

A. If you are following guidance issued by a medical professional or public health official to isolate or quarantine yourself as a result of exposure to COVID-19 and you are not receiving paid sick leave from your employer, you may be eligible to receive unemployment benefits.

Q17. What if my employer goes out of business as a result of COVID-19?

A. If you are without employment due to the COVID-19, file for unemployment.

Q18. My employer has shut down operations temporarily because an employee is sick and other employees have been asked to isolate or quarantine as a result of COVID-19. Am I eligible for unemployment benefits?

A. If you are not receiving payment from your employer, such as paid sick leave or paid time off, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits during this time.

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Q19. What if I am temporarily laid off work because business has slowed down as a result of COVID-19?

A. If you are laid off work temporarily or if your hours are reduced due to a business slowdown or a lack of demand as a result of COVID-19, you may be able to receive unemployment benefits.

Q20. Will I have problems filing for unemployment insurance benefits if I was a previous victim of Identity theft?

A. Please contact Unemployment Insurance to resolve the matter. We may ask you to provide a copy of your driver's license/state ID and birth certificate or social security card to rectify the problem.

How to Contact UIA

Need help? If you have questions, **there are several ways you can contact us.**

- **Log on to your MIWAM account and chat live with us.**
- **Log onto your MIWAM account and send us a message. We will respond back by either calling you or replying to your message.**
- **Call 1-866-500-0017 to speak with a customer service agent. Monday-Friday, 8 am- 4:30 pm**
- **In person, by appointment, at a Local Office. Call 1-866-500-0017 to schedule an appointment. Monday through Friday after 5 pm, nights and weekends.**

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