

# Frequently Asked Questions

## COVID 19

Office of Julian Alvarez, Commissioner  
Representing Labor

### **Can I file a claim for unemployment benefits?**

If your employment has been affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19), and you are not receiving paid time off from your employer, you may apply for benefits and TWC will investigate why you lost your job and mail a decision explaining whether you are eligible for unemployment benefits.

TWC evaluates your unemployment benefits claim on a case by case basis based on you meeting three (3) requirements:

- **Past Wages:** Your past wages are one of the eligibility requirements and the basis of your potential unemployment benefit amounts.
- **Job Separation:** To be eligible for benefits based on your job separation, you must be either unemployed or working reduced hours through no fault of your own. Special considerations on a case by case basis are being applied relative to coronavirus depending on the circumstances. You will not be considered unemployed if you are receiving paid time off.
- **Ongoing Eligibility Requirements:** In addition to the past wages and job separation eligibility requirements, there are requirements you must continue to meet to stay eligible and you may find those online under “See Ongoing Eligibility Requirements for Receiving Unemployment Benefits” at [www.texasworkforce.org](http://www.texasworkforce.org). Some eligibility requirements, such as the waiting

week and the requirement to search for work, have been [waived](#) at this time.

## **What do I do if I'm self-employed, an independent contractor, gig worker, or otherwise, not an "employee"?**

Those who are not "employees", which includes self-employed, independent contractors, gig workers and those paid via 1099, may be eligible for funds under Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC). Texas Workforce Commission is working to implement the final application process for these funds. You can sign up for updates here:

<https://twc.texas.gov/news/covid-19-resources-job-seekers#signUpForUpdates>. While the process is being finalized, please apply for regular unemployment benefits to start the process.

## **How do I get the additional \$600 per week?**

Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) will increase unemployment benefit amounts by \$600 per week for workers laid off, terminated or furloughed because of COVID-19. Texas Workforce Commission is working to implement this program. You can sign up for updates here: <https://twc.texas.gov/news/covid-19-resources-job-seekers#signUpForUpdates>.

## **Can I file if I haven't been told that I've been laid off?**

You can file a claim for unemployment benefits if you are not working and not earning any wages. If you are currently receiving paid leave—such as sick time or vacation time—from your employer for your time off, then you are considered employed, and your claim will be considered invalid.

## **What can I do if my hours have been reduced?**

You can also file a claim for unemployment benefits if you are partially unemployed, which means working part-time and receiving less than 125% of your weekly benefit amount. The amount of unemployment benefits that you will receive in a week will be prorated based on your earnings for that benefit week.

## **How do I apply for unemployment benefits?**

You may apply for unemployment benefits or check the status of your claim online at [ui.texasworkforce.org](http://ui.texasworkforce.org) any time 24/7 using [Unemployment Benefits Services](#) and this will allow TWC to more quickly handle your claim needs. Due to high call volumes, everyone who can file online is encouraged to do so. If you do not have internet access then you may call TWC's Tele-Center at 800-939-6631 from 8 a.m.-6 p.m. Central Time Monday through Friday.

## **How do I reset my password?**

How to Reset Your Unemployment Benefits Password

1. Visit <https://apps.twc.state.tx.us/UBS/security/logon.do>
2. Click "Forgot Password?"
3. Enter your User-ID, First+Last Name.
4. Answer Security Question.
5. Enter your new password+retype it. Click submit.

## **Do I have to search for work?**

At this time, the requirement to search for work has been suspended at this time.

## **How long will it take for me to start receiving unemployment benefits?**

Governor Abbot waived the 10-day investigation period and waived the waiting week. If your claim is uncontested, you should receive your first payment within three weeks of filing. Just make sure to follow the instructions provided, including making payment requests *on schedule*.

Information on requesting payments, including a tutorial, can be found here: <https://twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/unemployment-benefits-services#requestAPayment>.

## **I'm already on unemployment benefits, can I have an extension of unemployment benefits?**

Recent legislation provides for an extension of unemployment benefits for those who have exhausted benefits. If you have exhausted benefits, please continue to file payment requests, and TWC will reach out to you if any additional information is required. You can sign up for updates here: <https://twc.texas.gov/news/covid-19-resources-job-seekers#signUpForUpdates>.

## **If you have more questions about unemployment benefits:**

Additional information can be found at <https://twc.texas.gov/jobseekers/unemployment-benefits> and in our [Unemployment Benefits Handbook](#).

If you email for assistance, please include:

- your name

- the last 4 digits of your Social Security number,
- a phone number where you can be reached, and
- a brief description of the issue.

If you are having trouble filing a claim or trouble with a PIN or password, please email [customers@twc.state.tx.us](mailto:customers@twc.state.tx.us).

If you have other questions, please email [laborinfo@twc.state.tx.us](mailto:laborinfo@twc.state.tx.us).