

(Update) Notice to Individuals Inquiring About the Availability of Unemployment Insurance Benefits As A Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic

March 20, 2020

The primary mission of Arkansas' Unemployment Insurance program is to provide unemployment insurance benefits to eligible full-time and part-time workers who become separated from employment through no fault of their own, or workers who have experienced a reduction in the number of hours worked, including workers who are impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Workers who have become separated from employment as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic should file their unemployment insurance claims through the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services.

There are multiple ways to apply for unemployment benefits:

1. File online at www.ezarc.dws.arkansas.gov.
We appreciate your patience and understanding as we are experiencing delays in the EZARC online application system. Currently the hub is being saturated from all States due to the COVID-19. Claimants are asked to only enter a Social once, not several times.
2. Call the nearest Workforce Center directly, or call 1-855-225-4440. While it is not recommended, you may visit your [nearest workforce center](#).
3. Effective Monday, March 23, 2020, a Temporary Claims Processing Hotline will be available for affected workers who require assistance in filing their unemployment claims. The Temporary Claims Processing Hotline can be reached at 1-844-908-2178 or 501-534-6304 from 8a.m. to 3:30p.m.

With states responding to increased volumes of initial UI claims related to COVID-19 shutdowns, the national claims filing hub is facing some transaction processing issues and delays. Configuration changes have been made to accommodate the volume increase and reduce response time delays. We apologize for any inconvenience our clients may experience in their attempts to file claims online.

Generally, workers who are laid off due to a business closure or are unable to work due to COVID-19 quarantines will be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits provided they meet the other eligibility requirements. While the increase in unemployment claims is largely due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, DWS accepts unemployment claims regardless of the reason for unemployment. Effective March 18, 2020, Governor Hutchinson authorized the following unemployment insurance waivers for 30 days:

- Waived one-week waiting period, allowing ADWS to pay claims more quickly.
- Waived work-search requirement, allowing unemployed to receive benefits without seeking employment.
- Waived requirement for in-person follow-up after a claim has been filed, allowing the unemployed to apply for benefits online or by telephone, thus furthering the effort to minimize the risk of spreading COVID-19.

At this time, it is not known whether or not Disaster Unemployment Assistance will be made available for individuals who do not otherwise qualify for regular unemployment insurance benefits. ADWS asks that you proceed with filing a regular unemployment insurance claim even if it is later determined that you are not eligible due to a lack of sufficient wages from work or are engaged in self-employment. Should Disaster Unemployment Assistance be authorized at a later date, you will have completed the first step in seeking those benefits.

For additional questions related to the Unemployment Insurance program, please contact your local office representative or contact ADWS Info by calling 1-855-225-4440 or email ADWS.Info@arkansas.gov.