

Frequent Unemployment Questions and Quick Tips for Union Members

WHEN SHOULD I FILE FOR BENEFITS?

- File your claim **the first week you are fully or partially unemployed**
- For example, if you are laid off on Friday, January 9th, you can file your claim from Sunday, January, 11th through Saturday, January 17th
 - Please note, the Department of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) considers Sunday the first day of a new week
- If you fail to file for benefits on time, you **will not** be able to go back and claim the week you missed
- If you are approved for benefits, your claim will remain open for 1 year/52 weeks.
 - If you return to work and are separated from your job again within that period, you can “reopen” and file a new claim if you have not exhausted your benefits

HOW MUCH WILL I GET PAID

- If you are eligible to receive unemployment benefits, your weekly benefit amount will be around 50% of your average weekly wage, up to the maximum amount set by law
- Your “benefit rate” is determined using wages from the two highest quarters of your base period (how much you earned in the last 4 completed quarters)
- As of October 5, 2025 the maximum weekly benefit amount is **\$1,105 per week** and the maximum duration of benefits is **30 weeks**
- Your first week of filing for unemployment benefits is considered a mandatory “waiting week” during which no benefits are paid, even if you are eligible for benefits

WHEN SHOULD I EXPECT TO RECEIVE BENEFITS?

- Timeliness for receiving unemployment benefits is within **3 weeks** from the initial date of filing a claim. This can be delayed if:
 - You fail to pass/complete identity verification
 - There is an issue with your claim
 - You answer a question incorrectly
 - You fail to respond to DUA questionnaire/correspondence
- Employers have **10 business days** to respond to an employment verification questionnaire
 - This questionnaire will not be generated until your identity has been successfully verified



INFORMATION ON IDENTITY VERIFICATION

- The new unemployment system initiates identity verification automatically when you open/reopen a claim.
 - You may be asked to complete a quiz (on things only you would know)
 - If passed, your identity verification will be approved
 - If a question is answered incorrectly, you will be disqualified immediately
 - If you fail to finish the quiz or the quiz times out while you are answering questions, you will be disqualified
 - Some claimants will be directed to go to the post office and provide additional identification documents if they are unable to verify your identity
 - If disqualified, you can appeal the disqualification via the dashboard on the MyMassGov unemployment homepage

REASON FOR SEPARATION

- Select **'layoff'** as the reason for separation if your job assignment has ended, you are laid off, or the company closes
- DO NOT select 'still employed' or 'leave of absence' if you are no longer being paid by your employer. Doing so will create an issue on your claim
- DO NOT select 'discharged' or 'voluntary quit' unless your employer indicated you were discharged for performance, deliberate misconduct, or it was your decision to voluntarily leave the employer

UNION STATUS

- Building Trades members that are **MUST** seek work through their union hiring hall are **not required** to do 3 weekly job searches.
 - You **MUST** answer this question correctly, submit union/union agent information, and whether you are in good standing with your union hiring hall to be exempt from job search
 - If Building Trades members answer this question incorrectly, they will have to complete 3 weekly job searches, register with a career center, and **MAY** be selected to complete a Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) seminar
- Union members **NOT** restricted from finding work through a union hiring hall **MUST** complete 3 job searches per week, register with a career center, and **MAY** be selected to complete a RESEA seminar
- Claimants who are chosen to attend a RESEA seminar and fail to do so will stop receiving unemployment benefits until the seminar is completed through their selected career center



MISSING OR INCORRECT WAGES

- If your wages are missing, incorrect, or your benefit rate is lower than expected go to:
 - Dashboard – scroll down to benefit details
 - Click file wage correction
 - Submit paystubs or w-2 (or other supporting documents)
 - Select your hearing preference in case your employer disputes the wage correction

PART-TIME WORK

- You may be eligible for unemployment benefits while earning part-time income.
- You must report any amount of part-time work
- Any earnings greater than 1/3 of your weekly benefit amount will be deducted dollar for dollar before any deductions are taken
- If you are working or begin a part-time job while collecting benefits, leaving your part-time job voluntarily or being fired may disqualify you from receiving unemployment benefits

CHECK YOUR DASHBOARD REGULARLY

- **Be sure to check Action Center and Additional Services on the unemployment portal's dashboard (messages and letters) regularly to address any issues or provide additional information DUA may need**
- **Failure to respond could lead to a delay in receiving benefits or disqualification**
- **DUA Call Center can be reached at (877)-626-6800 and is open Monday-Thursday from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm**