

Reemployment Assistance

Frequently Asked Questions



Eligibility Requirements:

- You must have lost your job through no fault of your own, so you must not have quit for personal reasons or been terminated for malicious misconduct (poor job performance does not disqualify you);
- You must be totally or partially unemployed;
- You must have a minimum amount of wages earned in what is called the "base period," which is the first four complete quarters beginning 18 months prior to your claim;
- You must be able to work, available to work, and actively seeking work. This includes being able to get to a job and have child care if necessary.
- **CARES Act Eligibility** - Individuals who are self-employed, independent contractors and nonprofit employees, those that are otherwise ineligible for state Reemployment Assistance benefits and those that have exhausted state and federal benefits may be eligible. Pandemic Unemployment Assistance eligibility does not include individuals who have the ability to telework and receive pay or individuals who are receiving paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits.

DEO will gather facts and determine whether you qualify. When the department receives information regarding your claim the following will happen:

- Your claim will be referred to a worker to determine eligibility.
- You may be contacted for additional information by telephone, email or mail.
- A separate determination will be made for each issue and job separation that may affect your claim.

Q: How do I know if I qualify for Reemployment benefits?

A: Please apply for Reemployment Assistance Benefits through CONNECT. When your application has been processed, we will notify you of your eligibility by providing a written determination electronically and/or by mail to explain your eligibility status.

- If you are eligible on all issues, you will receive payment for any weeks that you requested during the bi-weekly process.
- If you are not eligible, the written determination will explain the reason we denied your claim and will explain your appeal rights.
- If you disagree with a determination that denies benefits, you may request an appeal hearing.

When reviewing your claim, we will look to answer several questions that will impact your eligibility. Here are some examples:

- **Ability and Availability Issues:** In addition to reviewing why you lost your employment, we will look at whether you are able to work in another job. If you are not available to accept a job if one is offered, you will not qualify for benefits.
- **Discharge:** If you were fired from your job, we will look at the reasons why. Your employer must show that it had just cause to let you go, such as misconduct on the job or that you didn't try to do your duties successfully even though the employer tried to help you.
- **Voluntary Quit:** If you voluntarily quit your job, you must show that the circumstances at work were so bad that you had no choice but to leave, even though you did everything you could to get your employer to solve the problem, such as sexual harassment or being asked to engage

in illegal conduct.

- There are other factors that may impact your eligibility that we will ask you about. The most important thing for you to do is to answer all questions as accurately as possible. Always know that you can ask us questions at any time during the process by calling **1-800-204-2418**.

Q: What will the new CARES ACT provide me for Reemployment Assistance?

A: The CARES ACT provides eligible individuals with \$600 per week in addition to the weekly benefit amount determined under state law.

Q: If I am self-employed, do I need to file a claim online for Reemployment Assistance?

A: Yes, you will first need to file a claim online to see if you are eligible for a regular claim. After you have submitted your claim, continue to check your CONNECT account for updates on what additional information is needed.

Q: Do I need to submit an additional application to receive the additional \$600 per week on my unemployment claim?

A: No, if you have filed a new Reemployment Assistance benefits claim and it is being processed; or you have an existing RA claim, there is nothing you need to do to receive the additional benefits. Payments will be issued as they become available.

Q: How can I reset my PIN to access my CONNECT profile?

A: There are two options to have your pin reset.

- After entering your Social Security number on the CONNECT login page, select the “**Forgot PIN**” option to reset your PIN after verifying your information.
- You can submit documents verifying your identity to the department. Please provide a signed copy of your Social Security card and a copy of your valid driver’s license or state ID. These can be sent by fax or email to, Fax: 321-332-6608 or E-mail: IdentityRequest@deo.myflorida.com

If you are unable to reset your PIN through the options above, contact us at **1-800-297-0586**.

Q: Am I eligible for benefits if I am an independent contractor?

A: Yes, under the CARES Act, Individuals who are self-employed, independent contractors and nonprofit employees, those that are otherwise ineligible for state Reemployment Assistance benefits and those that have exhausted state and federal benefits may be eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance. However, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance eligibility does not include individuals who have the ability to telework and receive pay or individuals who are receiving paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits.

However, in normal circumstances, individuals whose income is only from self-employment or work as an independent contractor are not normally eligible for reemployment assistance benefits. However, if an independent contractor or self-employed individual also received wages through services performed as an employee (i.e., they had another job with an employer) during the base period (first 12 months of the past 15 months), he or she may be eligible for reemployment assistance benefits.

Q: I heard work registration requirements are waived, what does that mean?

A: Individuals filing an application for benefits from March 15, 2020 until May 2, 2020, will not be required to complete the work registration in Employ Florida. Even though you may be prompted to register, and you may receive messages on screens in the CONNECT case system, you do not need to complete the registration if your application is filed between March 15, 2020 and May 2, 2020. If you completed your application prior to March 15, 2020, you must complete the online work registration.

Q: I heard work search requirements are waived, what does that mean?

A: Individuals are still required to log onto the CONNECT system every 2 weeks to complete their request for benefits. The work search requirement is waived for individuals requesting benefits for the weeks of March 15, 2020 to May 2, 2020. However, you must fulfill the work search requirements for any weeks prior to March 15, 2020.

When completing the request, you will be asked questions about your ability and availability to look for work and any work and earnings you have had 2 weeks prior to your application date. If you did not search for work due to the waiver in Emergency Order No. DEO 20-11, you may put “not applicable” or “not able to search for work.” Then, proceed through to the next step in the request process. You may be asked additional questions that need to be answered to proceed to the next step in the request process. If you answered that you did not search for work, you will not be asked to complete a work search log. If you did search for work, you may be asked to complete a work search log.

Q: Is there any location I can go to file my application in-person?

A: You will need to file for benefits online at <https://connect.myflorida.com> and follow the instructions. If you have questions or need assistance filing your application online, you can contact us at 1-800-204-2418 for assistance. Currently, there is not a location for in-person application filing. We recommend using Internet Explorer and a laptop or desktop computer to complete your application. Currently, the application cannot be accessed on mobile electronic devices.

Q: My employer has temporarily closed their business due to COVID-19. The date I was provided to return to work is within 8 weeks from the date I was laid off. How do I request Reemployment Assistance benefits?

A: You may be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits due to being on a temporary layoff. If you are on a temporary layoff, you do not need to seek work with other employers but must be able to work, stay in contact with your employer and be available to work when called back by your employer. An application can be filed online using CONNECT. If you have never filed for benefits in Florida before, select “**File a New Claim.**”

Q: What if my layoff is permanent and my employer has closed their business due to COVID-19?

A: You may be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits if your employer has no work available, the business closed or your position was eliminated due to budget cuts and you have not been given a return to work date. However, to be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits, all other eligibility requirements must be met.

Q: My employer reduced my hours as a result of COVID-19. Will I be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits?

A: If your hours and earnings have been substantially reduced, you may be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits. All workers affected by COVID-19 are encouraged to apply for Reemployment Assistance benefits. The Reemployment Assistance team will review your application and determine your eligibility for benefits.

Q: Will I be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits if my employer remains open, but I don't want to come to work because of the risk of exposure to COVID-19?

A: Reemployment Assistance benefits are available to individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own, assuming all other eligibility requirements are met. You can file an application online to determine the possibility of receiving Reemployment Assistance benefits.

Q: My work is event-based, and many of my future jobs have been cancelled. Am I eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits?

A: If you are out of work because there is no work available, you may be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits.

Q: My local school district closed, and I must stay home with my children. Am I eligible to receive Reemployment Assistance benefits?

A: Reemployment Assistance benefits are available to individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own. If you are out of work due to personal reasons, you will not qualify for Reemployment Assistance benefits. You can file an application online to determine the possibility of receiving benefits.

Q: Do I need to complete a special Reemployment Assistance benefits application because I have been financially impacted by the Florida's mitigation efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

A: No, the standard Reemployment Assistance benefits application will be used for individuals impacted by efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. An application can be filed online using [CONNECT](#). You will be notified if there is additional paperwork or information needed for the Reemployment Assistance team to completely review and process your application.

Q: My employer has shut down operations temporarily because an employee is sick, and we have been asked to isolate or quarantine as a result of COVID-19. Am I eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits?

A: If your employer shuts down operations and no work is available, you may be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits. You can file an application online to determine the possibility of receiving benefits.

Q: If I am forced to remain in my home because I am quarantined by a medical professional or by government direction, will I be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits?

A: You may be eligible to receive Reemployment Assistance benefits, but you must be able and available for work. You can file an application to determine your eligibility for receiving Reemployment Assistance benefits.

Q: Do I have to look for other work if my employer temporarily closes because of COVID-19?

A: You do not have to look for work if you have a return to work date within eight weeks of your layoff date. Individuals are still required to log onto the CONNECT system every 2 weeks to complete their request for benefits. If your temporary layoff is longer than 12 weeks, the work search requirement has been waived for individuals requesting benefits for the weeks of March 15, 2020 to May 2, 2020. However, you must fulfill the work search requirements for any weeks prior to March 15, 2020.

Q: What if my employer goes out of business as a result of COVID-19?

A: If all eligibility requirements are met, Reemployment Assistance benefits are available to individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own. You can file an application online to determine the possibility of receiving Reemployment Assistance benefits.

Q: Are any benefits available if I'm out of work due to COVID-19 and I'm self-employed?

A: File an application online to determine the possibility of receiving Reemployment Assistance benefits. Because of the CARES Act, individuals who are self-employed, independent contractors and nonprofit employees, those that are otherwise ineligible for state Reemployment Assistance benefits and those that have exhausted state and federal benefits may be eligible. Pandemic Unemployment Assistance eligibility does not include individuals who have the ability to telework and receive pay or individuals who are receiving paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits.

Q: I am currently unemployed, but I feel the need to self-quarantine. Am I eligible for benefits?

A: You must be able and available for work to receive Reemployment Assistance benefits. Able to work means physically and mentally capable of performing the duties of the occupation in which work is being sought. Available for work means actively seeking and being ready and willing to accept suitable work. An individual may be considered available for work if there are no limitations placed on the individual that would constitute withdrawal from the labor market. If you are on a temporary layoff you must be available to work only for the employer that has temporarily laid you off.

Q: Do I have to report for my mandatory appointment at CareerSource center at this time?

A: Please contact the CareerSource center that has notified you about your appointment to reschedule the appointment and find out what their procedures are.

General Business Reemployment Assistance Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: I may have to lay off employees due to business demand slowing down as a result of the state's mitigation efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Will my tax account be impacted?

A: Reemployment Assistance benefits are available to individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own, assuming all other eligibility requirements are met. Currently, there are no modifications to Florida law regarding employer's chargeability, contributions and/or reimbursements. Employers are encouraged to provide detailed responses on the Notice of Claim regarding how COVID-19 affected the temporary or permanent separation or leave of absence.

Q: Can my employees apply Reemployment Assistance benefits if they are told to go home for medical reasons?

A: While on paid medical leave, an employee would not be considered "unemployed" under Florida Reemployment Assistance laws. Therefore, if an employee is receiving paid leave benefits, they are ineligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits.

Q: What if my employees are not getting paid leave, are they eligible for Reemployment Assistance?

A: If an employee is on unpaid leave, they may be eligible to receive Reemployment Assistance benefits depending on the circumstances surrounding the leave of absence.

Q: Do my employees get Reemployment Assistance benefits even if they are too sick to work?

A: Any employee can file a claim for Reemployment Assistance benefits. However, they must meet the eligibility requirements in order to draw benefits.