# ACCESSING UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS: A QUICK GUIDE TO APPLYING

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible for unemployment insurance (UI) benefits, you must have either lost your job, through no fault of your own, or had your wages or salary reduced. Traditional unemployment insurance is not available to people who are independent contractors, self-employed, or gig workers.

## HOW DO I APPLY?

If you are eligible for unemployment insurance, you should:

1. Log on to www.dcnetworks.org and click the tab labeled "Claim Unemployment Benefits."
2. Locate and click the section marked "File for Benefits" on the "Unemployment Insurance Service Center for Claimants" page.
3. Answer the questions with accurate information to complete the claim filing process.
4. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click the section marked "File Your Claim On-Line."

If you do not have internet access or need assistance with filing a claim, please dial 202-724-7000 to schedule an appointment for in-person service at an American Job Center location.

## WHAT DO I NEED TO APPLY?

| UI Application Checklist |
| --- |
| Social security number |
| Most recent employer's name, address, phone number, and dates of employment |
| Alien Registration Number, if you are not a US Citizen |
| DD Form 214, if you are ex-military |
| Standard Form 8 or Standard Form 50, if you are a former federal employee |
| Severance pay information (only if you did or will receive severance pay) |
| Pension information (only if you are receiving a pension payment) |

## HOW WILL MY WAGES BE DETERMINED?

To receive UI, you must meet certain wage requirements within a 12-month period called the base period. The base period is determined by the date you filed your initial claim for benefits:

| If the first full week of your claim is in the month of: | Your base period is the month period ending the previous: |
|---|---|
| January, February, or March | September 30 |
| April, May, or June | December 31 |
| July, August, or September | March 31 |
| October, November, or December | June 30 |

### To meet wage requirements, you must have:

- ✓ At least $1,300 in wages in one quarter of the base period;
- ✓ Wages in at least two quarters of the base period;
- ✓ At least $1,950 in wages for the entire base period; and
- ✓ Total base period wages that are at least one and one half times the wages in your highest quarter or be within $70 of that amount.

For example, based on the chart below, this individual would be deemed eligible for unemployment benefits. The claimant meets requirements 1-4 above.

| Base Period | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Quarter 1** | **Quarter 2** | **Total wages $2,050** |
| Total wages $650 | Total wages $1,400 | |
| | | **$1,400 x 1.5 = $2,100** |

Base period wages may be from District employers, the District government, the federal government, the U.S. military, or from employers in other states.

## I HAVE APPLIED FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE...WHAT'S NEXT?
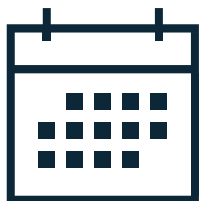
### How many days does it take for a benefit to reach a claimant?

Generally, it takes up to 21 days to get a claim payment out to an applicant, but we are working as quickly as possible.

### How do I maintain my benefits?

To remain eligible for UI benefits, you must continue to meet wage requirements along with the following conditions:

✓ Be unemployed through no fault of your own

✓ Report all earnings from work, including self-employment, on your weekly claim for benefits

✓ Receive or seek unemployment benefits from the District of Columbia only and not any other state

✓ Be available for work, physically able to work, and actively seeking work. You must conduct a minimum of two (2) job searches per week.

**Need assistance with your claim? Call (202) 724 - 7000 or schedule an in-person appointment at one of our American Job Centers.**

# HOW DOES THE DISTRICT PREVENT FRAUD?

## Identity Verification Process

| Online Security Measures | → | Proof of Identity | → | Protection for Compromised Accounts |

✓ The District has implemented an **identity verification & authentication** security feature as part of the online application process. When applying online, your identity is verified when you:

- File an initial claim for unemployment benefits;
- Re-open an unemployment benefits claim; or
- File an additional unemployment benefits claim.

✓ During the initial claims application, your personal data is verified by:

- Cross-matching the information you provide against a records database and
- Asking a series of multiple-choice questions based on information only you would be able to answer. A potential identity thief would not have access to this information.

✓ If your information does not accurately match and/or you do not answer the multiple-choice questions correctly, then an issue is generated on your claim, which prevents you from receiving benefits.

✓ If there are any flags on your account, you will be required to provide the District of Columbia's Office of Unemployment Compensation with documents to verify your identity, including original documents or copies of the following:

- A Government-Issued Photo I.D.;
- Your Social Security Card; and
- Other documentation that contains your name and current mailing address

✓ You may not opt out of participating in the Identity Verification & Authentication Program

✓ You may be required to report in person to validate your identity.

# HOW DOES THE DISTRICT PREVENT FRAUD?

## Required Documents

### Instructions for Submitting Identity Information

Instructions will be provided by phone or an email that contains the list of acceptable identity verification documents.

If required, DOES may ask you to submit a copy of your social security card and accompanying state-issued photo identification to the DOES email address: DOESUI.Verification@dc.gov.

Once our office receives the requested documents, DOES will make a decision regarding your identity verification.

NO unemployment insurance benefit payments will be paid until the Office of Unemployment Compensation confirms that your identity has been properly verified through the submission of your identity documentation.

Non-residents of the District of Columbia are permitted to fax or email copies of their identity documentation. An unemployment compensation Claims Examiner will either call or email you instructions to explain this process.

## Secure Email System

DOES, in conjunction with Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO), is using a product called ZIX to ensure that all email exchanged between DOES and each claimant is secure and safe. All emails sent to claimants with personally identifiable information will come from the @zixmessagecenter.com mailbox.

DOES DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR