

**REEMPLOYMENT
ASSISTANCE
COVID-19
FREQUENTLY
ASKED
QUESTIONS**

DETERMINING YOUR QUALIFICATION AND ELIGIBILITY FOR REEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE BENEFITS

To qualify for benefits, you must have lost your job through no fault of your own. We 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.

When we finish reviewing your claim, a written determination will be available 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.

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

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 there 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 and quickly as possible. Always know that you can ask us questions at any time during the process by calling **1-800-204-2418**.

CLAIMANT FAQs:

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

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

- A. After entering your Social Security number on the **CONNECT** login page, select the “**Forgot PIN**” option to reset your PIN after verifying your information.
- B. 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**

Please allow three business days for the documents to be reviewed and, then contact the department at **1-800-297-0586** to verify your information.

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: Individuals whose income is only from self-employment or work as an independent contractor will not be 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 regarding looking for work, your ability and availability for work, and any work and earnings for the prior 2 weeks. If you answer in the negative, that you did not search for work, you will not be asked to complete a work search log. You may be asked additional questions regarding searching for work; 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 and 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 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 by going online to <https://connect.myflorida.com> and following the instructions. If you have questions or need assistance filing your application contact us at **1-800-204-2418** for assistance. Currently, there is not a location for in-person application filing.

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 are 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. Currently, 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.

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: You can file an application to determine the possibility of receiving Reemployment Assistance benefits. However, self-employed individuals generally do not pay Unemployment Insurance taxes and are not eligible for benefits.

Q: Are there any extended benefits available for Reemployment Assistance?

A: Currently, there are no extended benefits available.

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 about your appointment to reschedule the appointment and find out what their procedures are.

EMPLOYER FAQs:

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 the employer's 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: Are there any programs available that could potentially eliminate the need to lay off my staff?

A: The Short Time Compensation program helps employers retain their workforce in times of temporary slowdown by encouraging work sharing as an alternative to layoff.

To avoid total layoff of some employees, the Short Time Compensation program permits prorated Reemployment Assistance benefits to employees whose work hours and earnings are reduced as part of a Short Time Compensation plan.

To apply for the Short Time Compensation Program, please follow this link to the Employer Login page of **CONNECT**.

Q: Can an employee draw 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 the employee is not getting paid leave?

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: Does an employee 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.