



## Frequently Asked Questions

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Check [des.nc.gov](https://des.nc.gov) for the most up-to-date information and FAQs.



## What benefits are available? And who may be eligible?

### Unemployment Benefit Programs

#### State Unemployment Insurance (UI)

North Carolina's regular state unemployment benefits.

- \$350 max. weekly  
Up to 12 weeks
- + \$600 weekly for weeks ending 4/4 – 7/25\*

For people whose employment was subject to unemployment insurance tax and who meet requirements for work and wage history.

#### Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)

Federal program for people not eligible for state unemployment benefits, such as independent contractors and self-employed workers available for weeks through Dec. 26, 2020.

- \$350 max. weekly  
Up to 39 weeks
- + \$600 weekly for weeks ending 4/4 – 7/25\*

For people who are ineligible for state unemployment benefits or any extensions to state unemployment benefits, and unable to work as a direct result of COVID-19.

#### Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)

A 13-week extension to state unemployment benefits, available for weeks ending April 4 through Dec. 26, 2020.

- \$350 max. weekly  
Up to 13 weeks
- + \$600 weekly for weeks ending 4/4 – 7/25\*

For people who are eligible for state unemployment insurance but have exhausted their 12 weeks of benefits. Reason for loss of work does not need to be COVID-19.

\*Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC): Individuals do not need to apply separately for these benefits.



## How do I apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)?

Apply at [des.nc.gov](https://des.nc.gov) beginning April 24, 2020.

- If you do not have an unemployment claim effective in April, sign into your online account and click on the File a New Unemployment Insurance Claim link so we can determine your eligibility for state unemployment benefits. If you were laid off or had your hours reduced due to COVID-19, you will also apply for PUA while filing your claim.
- If you applied and were denied for state unemployment benefits before April 24, we may need additional information to determine whether you are eligible for PUA. Sign into your online account and click on the 'Apply for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance' link to complete the process.
- If your claim is listed as 'pending,' we are still reviewing your eligibility for state unemployment benefits. You may not apply for PUA while your claim is pending.
- If you are currently receiving state unemployment benefits, you are not eligible for PUA.

## What kinds of documents do I need when applying for PUA?

Upload all necessary documents, such as proof of income or proof of medical diagnosis, with your application before you click 'Submit.' If you do not have your documents when you start your application, you can save your work and come back to it when you are ready to submit all of your information.

Examples of documents to show past employment and income:

- 2019 Tax Returns
- Recent Paycheck Stubs
- Bank Receipts
- 1099s
- Billing statements, notices
- Business licenses
- Contracts, invoices, ledgers

Examples of documents to show COVID-19 as the reason for loss of work:

- Documentation from medical professionals related to diagnosis or isolation instructions
- Notices from school or childcare providers
- Notices from county or state government regarding closures or stay at home orders
- Documentation that a job offer or need for your services was canceled or delayed because of COVID-19



## If I'm a 1099 employee, how do I list my last employer?

If you're a 1099 employee, list the name and address displayed on your 1099 when completing the last employer section on your application. On the Employment History page, select **Add North Carolina Employer**.

**Division of Employment Security**  
North Carolina Department of Commerce

**APPLY FOR BENEFITS: EMPLOYMENT HISTORY**

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. Make sure every employer you worked for since 01/01/2019 through today is listed.
2. Make sure every Military and Federal Employer you worked for since 24 months through today is listed.
3. If your employer is not listed, use the buttons below to add the employer.
4. If you did not work for an employer that is shown, click "Did not work for this employer."
5. For each employer, enter your dates of employment and the type of work you did (either full-time or part-time).

Employer Name	Type of Employment	Dates of Employment
3. If your employer is not listed, use the buttons below to add the employer.		

Note: An employer must be selected before continuing. Type of Employment and Dates of Employment are required for the selected employer and all Military / Federal employers.

I have not worked since 01/01/2019

On the next page, self-employed workers and independent contractors should click on the green **Manual Entry** button.

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**APPLY FOR BENEFITS: ADD NC EMPLOYER**

Please provide your employer by using one of the following options:

**Option 1**  
\*Enter the Employer Name and click on the Search button    
Please refer to the business name on your last paystub when searching for the correct employer.

**Option 2**  
If you're unable to find your employer from above, click on the Manual Entry button

Employer Selected

North Carolina Employer(s) may be added using one of the Options listed above, or continue to the next screen by pressing the Finish button below.



On the Manual Entry page, enter the name and address you use for work purposes. (i.e., Joe Claimant or Joe Claimant’s Business). Upload your proof of income before submitting your claim.

## When will Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) be available?

The Division of Employment Security is working as quickly as possible to modify our systems to make sure people receive timely and accurate PEUC payments. Please continue checking [des.nc.gov](http://des.nc.gov) for updates on the availability of PEUC in North Carolina. If you are due any benefits prior to the full implementation of this program, you will be paid retroactively.



## Can I apply for unemployment benefits because of COVID-19?

### Can I apply for unemployment benefits because of COVID-19?

✓ You may be eligible for unemployment assistance if you have lost work or are working reduced hours as a direct result of COVID-19, for reasons including...

You have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 and seeking a medical diagnosis.

A member of your household has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

You are providing care for a family member or member of your household who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.

You are the primary caregiver for a child or person in your household who is unable to attend school or a care facility that is closed due to COVID-19.

You are unable to reach your place of employment because of a quarantine due to COVID-19.

You are unable to reach your place of employment because a health care provider advised you to self-quarantine due to COVID-19.

You were scheduled to begin employment and do not have a job or are unable to reach the job as a direct result of the COVID-19.

You have become the breadwinner or major support for a household because the head of the household has died as a direct result of COVID-19.

You have to quit your job as a direct result of COVID-19.

Your place of employment is closed as a direct result of COVID-19.

✗ You are not be eligible for unemployment benefits if you...

Have the ability to telework.

Are receiving paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits.

## When will I receive payment?

After you file your claim for unemployment insurance, your last employer is given, by law, 10 days to respond to DES about your claim. No payment will be released until after this 10-day period. Your claim may be identified as 'pending' during this period.

If there are no issues with your claim, it will take approximately 14 days from the time you file your claim to receive your first payment.



## What does it mean if my claim is 'pending'?

After you file your claim for unemployment insurance, your last employer is given, by law, 10 days to respond to DES about your claim. No payment will be released until after this 10-day period. Your claim may be 'pending' during this period.

If your employer does not respond within 10 days, and you have identified 'coronavirus' as the reason for separation from employment, the system will automatically adjudicate the issue. If all requirements are met, benefits will be paid. The employer will be notified of this determination of benefits by mail. If the employer feels the claim is not valid, they may appeal the determination.

## Do I have to search for work while filing for unemployment?

You do not have to conduct a work search while filing for unemployment while North Carolina is under a State of Emergency for COVID-19.

## Do I need to complete a Weekly Certification every week to receive benefits?

Yes. A Weekly Certification is a series of yes/no questions that helps determine your eligibility for benefits each week. If you do not complete a Weekly Certification, you will not be considered for payment for that week. Sign into your Online Account to complete your Weekly Certification. If you do not have online access, call 888-372-3453 (Weekly Certifications only).

**Note:** [N.C. Executive Order 118](#) waives the work search requirement for people filing for unemployment during the State of Emergency. You may answer 'yes' to the question 'Did you look for work?' on the Weekly Certification. However, answering 'no' to this question will not delay your weekly benefits.



## How do I find out my weekly benefit amount? How do I protest the determination of my weekly benefit amount?

After you file a claim, you will be mailed a Wage Transcript and Monetary Determination form (NCUI 550).

This will show your quarterly wages paid by each base period employer and your monetary eligibility, including your weekly benefit amount, duration of benefits and effective date of your claim. If you have been found ineligible for a weekly benefit, the reason will be shown on the form.

Monetary eligibility simply means that you have worked and earned enough wages within your base period to meet the requirements for establishing a claim. In order to receive benefit payments, you must meet additional requirements, such as completing your Weekly Certifications.

If you believe wages are missing or listed inaccurately on the form, you may file a protest within 10 days from the mailing of the Wage Transcript and Monetary Determination form.

You may file your protest by sending it to the address or fax below. In your protest, include a copy of the form with an explanation of your protest and proof of wages you believe were incorrectly reported.

*Mail: P.O. 27967, Raleigh, NC 27611-7967*

*Fax Number: 919.857.1296*

## Are part-time employees eligible?

Part time employees may qualify for unemployment benefits if they have earned enough money in their base period to received benefits.

Your base period is the time frame used to determine whether you are monetarily eligible to receive unemployment payments. It normally includes the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters.

The individual must have been 1) paid wages in at least two quarters of the base period, and 2) have been paid wages totaling at least six times the average weekly insured wage in the base period.

Currently, six times the average weekly insured wage in the base period equates to \$5,818.50.



## Am I eligible for unemployment assistance if I'm working reduced hours?

If you're working reduced hours, you may still be eligible for unemployment benefits. However, the amount you earn could affect your weekly benefit amount.

You must report the money you earn when filing your Weekly Certification for unemployment. You can earn up to 20% of your weekly benefit amount without it counting against your weekly benefit. Earnings over that amount are deducted from your weekly benefits.

For example: If your weekly benefit amount is \$350, you can earn up to \$70 a week (20% of \$350) and receive the full \$350 in benefits. Every dollar you earn over \$70 will be deducted from the \$350. If you earn \$75 a week, your weekly benefit will be \$345; if you earn \$420 a week, your weekly benefit will be reduced to \$0.

## What is a base period?

Your base period is the time frame used to determine whether you are monetarily eligible to receive unemployment payments. Monetary eligibility simply means that you have worked and earned enough wages within your base period to meet the requirements for establishing a claim.

It normally includes the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters. (If you lack enough base period wages, DES may use an alternative base period to determine whether you are eligible for UI benefits. The alternative base period consists of the last four completed calendar quarters immediately before the first day of your benefit year.)

STANDARD BASE PERIOD								
2018	2019	2019	2019	2019	2020	2020	2020	2020
OCT NOV DEC	JAN FEB MAR	APR MAY JUN	JUL AUG SEP		JAN FEB MAR			CLAIM FILED
	JAN FEB MAR	APR MAY JUN	JUL AUG SEP	OCT NOV DEC		APR MAY JUN		
		APR MAY JUN	JUL AUG SEP	OCT NOV DEC	JAN FEB MAR		JUL AUG SEP	
BASE PERIOD			JUL AUG SEP	OCT NOV DEC	JAN FEB MAR	APR MAY JUN		OCT NOV DEC



## What if I have exhausted my state unemployment insurance benefits?

In North Carolina, the maximum duration for state unemployment insurance is currently 12 weeks in a 52-week period.

Individuals who have exhausted their benefits may be eligible for Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation, which provides up to 13 additional weeks of benefits for those who exhaust their state benefits. The Division of Employment Security is working as quickly as possible to modify our systems to make sure people receive timely and accurate PEUC payments. Please continue checking [des.nc.gov](https://des.nc.gov) for updates on the availability of PEUC in North Carolina. If you are due any benefits prior to the full implementation of this program, you will be paid retroactively. How do I find out my weekly benefit amount? How do I protest the determination of my weekly benefit amount?

## What if I'm having trouble accessing the DES online benefits system or getting through on the phone?

The Division of Employment Security is taking immediate actions to respond to the huge surge of unemployment claims that have been filed as a result of COVID-19. The division is quickly adding staff, equipment and IT infrastructure to help individuals and employers file and respond to unemployment claims. DES knows how important it is to continue processing claims and issuing payments as quickly and efficiently as possible.

We are aware of issues people are having accessing their online accounts and long wait times to speak to someone at the Customer Call Center. DES will ensure claimants do not miss out on any weeks of eligibility due to high call volume. We will begin the claim with the week when they initially attempted to file. If you are experiencing issues with the password or PIN for your account, please email [NCDESpasswordhelp@nccommerce.com](mailto:NCDESpasswordhelp@nccommerce.com) for assistance.

People are encouraged to regularly check [des.nc.gov](https://des.nc.gov) for the most up-to-date information and FAQs.