

US Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
Unemployment Insurance (UI)

Questions and Answers for Federal Employees and Contractors

Individuals who are separated from their job can apply for unemployment compensation by contacting their state UI agency. You may find your state UI agency at <https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/UnemploymentBenefits/unemployment-benefits.aspx>. Reference **Q10** and **Q11** regarding which state UI agency to contact.

You can also get free employment assistance at any American Job Center (AJC). AJC staff can help you look for work and offer job search workshops, free computer access, and more. To find a location near you, please visit <https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/AmericanJobCenters/american-job-centers.aspx>.

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A. FEDERAL EMPLOYEES: ELIGIBILITY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

For general information regarding Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) or any other Unemployment Insurance (UI) program, please visit <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/aboutui.asp>. This includes a link to the **UCFE Fact Sheet** found at https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/docs/factsheet/UCFE_FactSheet.pdf.

It is important that you provide accurate information, to the best of your ability, as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back benefits you received. Additionally, intentionally providing false information in order to collect unemployment compensation is fraud. This will result in penalties in addition to the requirement to repay any unemployment compensation you received.

Q1: I was recently separated from a civilian position with the Federal Government. Am I eligible for unemployment compensation?

A1: Eligibility requirements for federal civilian employees are the same as for the regular UI program. While each state sets its own guidelines for eligibility of unemployment compensation, you usually qualify if you: (1) are unemployed through no fault of your own; (2) meet work and wage requirements; and (3) meet any additional state requirements. Please reference our **Unemployment Insurance Fact Sheet** at https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/docs/factsheet/UI_Program_FactSheet.pdf.

All individuals are entitled to apply for unemployment compensation and the state UI agency will determine your eligibility.

Q2: I was recently separated from a civilian position with the Federal Government. If I am eligible for unemployment compensation, how much will I receive?

A2: Each state sets its own guidelines for eligibility of unemployment compensation and the amount an individual may receive. Reference [Q10](#) and [Q11](#) to identify which state to file a claim with.

For a quick snapshot of how each state computes benefit amounts, as well as the minimum and maximum amounts available, please reference the most recent **Significant Provisions of State Unemployment Insurance Laws** at <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/sigpros/2020-2029/July2024.pdf>. After you apply, the state UI agency will send you a Monetary Determination Notice

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that includes your official weekly benefit amount and the number of weeks for which you may be eligible for benefits.

Q3: I was not employed very long with the Federal Government when I separated. Am I eligible for unemployment compensation?

A3: As noted in the response to [Q1](#), while each state sets its own guidelines for eligibility of unemployment compensation, you usually qualify if you: (1) are unemployed through no fault of your own; (2) meet work and wage requirements; and (3) meet any additional state requirements. Please reference our

Unemployment Insurance Fact Sheet at

https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/docs/factsheet/UI_Program_FactSheet.pdf.

You must meet your state’s requirements for wages earned or time worked during an established period of time referred to as a “base period.” In most states, this is usually the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters prior to the time that your claim is filed. For example, if you file a claim in March 2025, the base period is October 2023 to September 2024.

Some states may also use an alternate base period if you don’t qualify for benefits using the standard base period. The alternate base period is usually the last four quarters immediately preceding the date you filed your unemployment compensation claim. For example, if you file a claim in March 2025, the alternate base period is January 2024 to December 2024.

Reference [Q10](#) and [Q11](#) regarding which state UI agency to contact. For additional information on how each state determines monetary eligibility, you can visit: <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/uilawcompar/2023/monetary.pdf>.

If you had other non-federal work during the base period, you may be eligible to combine wages from your federal and non-federal employment on your claim. The state UI agency will make this determination.

All individuals are entitled to apply for unemployment compensation and the state UI agency will determine your eligibility.

Q4: My agency reported that I was separated because of poor performance. Am I eligible for unemployment compensation?

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A4: See the response to [Q1](#). The state UI agency will ask you to provide additional details regarding your separation and will also contact the agency from which you were separated. Provide accurate information to the best of your knowledge and be prepared to include supporting documentation, where available. The state UI agency may reach out to you with follow-up questions, so please ensure your contact information is correct when filing your claim and is kept up to date.

Q5: My agency reported that I was separated because continued employment was not in the public interest. Am I eligible for unemployment compensation?

A5: See the response to [Q1](#) and [Q4](#).

Q6: I was separated while I was a probationary employee. Am I eligible for unemployment compensation?

A6: See the response to [Q3](#) regarding general eligibility requirements, including state work and wage requirements.

Additionally, the state UI agency will ask you to provide additional details regarding your separation and will also contact the agency from which you were separated. Provide accurate information to the best of your knowledge and be prepared to include supporting documentation, where available. The state UI agency may reach out to you with follow-up questions, so please ensure your contact information is correct when filing your claim and is kept up to date.

All individuals are entitled to apply for unemployment compensation and the state UI agency will determine your eligibility.

Q7: My agency directed me to return to the office five days a week. If I refuse to return to the office, am I eligible for unemployment compensation?

A7: See the response to [Q1](#) and [Q4](#). In all states, individuals who leave work voluntarily must have had good cause to do so to avoid being disqualified from receiving unemployment compensation. The definition of ‘good cause’ varies by state and an individual applying for unemployment compensation should consult the appropriate state statute, regulation, or policy for more specific information regarding the state’s good cause provisions.

Q8: My agency placed me on administrative leave. Am I eligible for unemployment compensation?

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A8: During the time that you continue to receive your normal pay, you are not considered unemployed and would not be eligible for unemployment compensation. If you are later terminated or at the end of the administrative leave period, see the response to [Q1](#) and [Q4](#).

Q9: How do I know if I qualify for unemployment compensation?

A9: Please reference our **Unemployment Insurance Fact Sheet** at https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/docs/factsheet/UI_Program_FactSheet.pdf.

After you apply, the state UI agency will send you a Monetary Determination Notice that includes your weekly benefit amount and the number of weeks for which you may be eligible for benefits. Please note that because the state UI agency will also reach out to your former employer, this process may take a few weeks. For former federal employees, see also the response to [Q20](#).

Additionally, there may be an eligibility issue(s) on your claim that requires further review by the state UI agency. For example, if you were terminated from employment, the state UI agency will attempt to gather information from you, your former employer, and any other interested parties. Once this review is complete, the state UI agency will either pay benefits for any eligible weeks filed or will send you a Notice of Determination that explains why you are not eligible and provides you with information on how to appeal the decision. Make sure to complete any weekly claim certifications provided by the state while the determination of eligibility is pending (see the response to [Q25](#)).

B. WHERE TO FILE A CLAIM

Each state operates its own UI program. Many require you to file for UI benefits online and some provide toll-free numbers or other ways to obtain assistance in filing. To view contact information for each state, please visit <https://www.careeronestop.org/localhelp/unemploymentbenefits/unemployment-benefits.aspx>.

You may not receive benefits from more than one state at the same time. It is important that you provide accurate information, to the best of your ability, as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back benefits you received. Additionally, intentionally providing false information in order to collect

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unemployment compensation is fraud. This will result in penalties in addition to the requirement to repay any unemployment compensation you received.

Q10: Where should I file my unemployment claim as a former federal employee?

A10: You should file your claim in the state where your last official duty station was located (as noted on your most recent Standard Form 50 (SF-50)). There are two exceptions to this:

1. If you had employment after separation from your federal employer: The unemployment compensation claim is filed in the state of last employment. For example, your official duty station was Washington, DC, and you were separated from your federal employment on February 13, 2025. You continue to have a part time job in Maryland as of March 1, 2025. Since you worked in Maryland after your separation from your federal job in Washington, DC, you would file your claim with the Maryland UI agency.
2. If your last duty station was outside of the United States: The unemployment compensation claim is filed with the UI agency in the state where you reside. For example, your last official duty station was in Germany. When you separated from federal service, you returned home to Georgia. You would file your claim in Georgia, since that is the state in which you reside.

Q11: I worked from home, but my official duty station (listed on my SF-50) was in a different state. Where do I file my unemployment claim?

A11: Generally, your unemployment claim is filed in the state of your last official duty station as listed on your SF-50 (reference the response to [Q10](#) for some exceptions).

Example 1: John lives in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and reports to his duty station (as listed on his SF-50) in Dallas, Texas, two days each pay period. John would file his claim with the UI agency in Texas.

Example 2: Cathy lives in Providence, Rhode Island. She was hired as a remote worker for the Department of Labor in Washington, DC, and has always worked out of her home. Her SF-50 identifies her duty station as her residence. Cathy would file her UI claim with the UI agency in Rhode Island.

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C. DOCUMENTATION NEEDED TO FILE A CLAIM

It is important that you provide accurate information, to the best of your ability, as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back benefits you received. Additionally, intentionally providing false information in order to collect unemployment compensation is fraud. This will result in penalties in addition to the requirement to repay any unemployment compensation you received.

Q12: What documents will I need to file for unemployment compensation?

A12: The state UI agency will generally verify your identity at the time of filing. Additionally, the state UI agency will generally request that you provide information on any other non-federal employment history for the last 18 months (this includes the name and address of all employers you worked for during the last 18 months and contact information for those employers).

The state UI agency may reach out to you with follow-up questions, so please ensure your correct contact information is provided at the time of filing and kept up to date.

If you were a federal employee, be prepared to also provide copies of the following documents. Your agency should have provided these forms to you upon separation from employment.

- SF-50, *Notification of Personnel Action* form, and
- SF-8, *Notice to Federal Employee About Unemployment Insurance* form.

In addition, or if these documents are unavailable, the state UI agency may request that you complete an affidavit using earnings and leave statements, W-2 forms, and/or other types of documentation that can establish that you were a federal employee and have worked and earned sufficient wages to qualify for unemployment compensation.

Q13: What do I do if I did not receive a copy of my SF-8 or SF-50 before being separated?

A13: The SF-8 is used primarily by state UI agencies to identify the federal identification code (FIC) and mailing address to send wage and separation requests to the separating federal agency. If you do not have your SF-8, you may

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find your agency's FIC at <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/unemcomp.asp> for use when filing your claim.

If you were recently separated from your federal job, contact your former agency's personnel office to obtain a copy of your SF-50.

If it has been more than 120 days since you were separated, contact the National Personnel Records Center through the National Archives at <https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center/civilian-non-archival>.

Additionally, the state UI agency may request that you complete an affidavit using earnings and leave statements, W-2 forms, and/or other types of documentation that can establish that you were a federal employee and have worked and earned sufficient wages to qualify for unemployment compensation.

Q14: I am concerned that the state UI agency will be unable to obtain information from my former employer. What does this mean for my unemployment compensation claim?

A14: Once you file your claim, the state UI agency will request wage and separation information from your federal employer to complete your claim. See the response to [Q20](#).

To supplement the employer's information and/or to make a decision with the best available information if the federal employer does not respond, the state agency may request you to submit copies of any of the following documents to complete your claim: SF-8, SF-50, W-2, recent earnings and leave statements, etc. Follow instructions provided by the state agency at the time of filing or instructions provided to you after you have filed your claim (*e.g.*, instructions on your Monetary Determination Notice). States may provide multiple options for you to submit these documents such as upload to the state's UI portal, fax or in person at a local American Job Center. Many states use automated systems to request information.

Given the volume of unemployment compensation claims being processed, states may require longer than normal processing times. During this time, be sure to continue filing your weekly certifications (see response to [Q25](#)).

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The state UI agency may reach out to you with follow-up questions, so please ensure your correct contact information is provided at the time of filing, and your contact information is kept up to date.

D. DEFERRED RESIGNATION PROGRAM (DRP): ELIGIBILITY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

It is important that you provide accurate information, to the best of your ability, as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back benefits you received. Additionally, intentionally providing false information in order to collect unemployment compensation is fraud. This will result in penalties in addition to the requirement to repay any unemployment compensation you received.

Q15: Am I eligible for unemployment compensation if I accepted the deferred resignation program?

A15: As noted in the response to [Q1](#), while each state sets its own guidelines for eligibility of unemployment compensation, you usually qualify if you: (1) are unemployed through no fault of your own; (2) meet work and wage requirements; and (3) meet any additional state requirements. Please reference our **Unemployment Insurance Fact Sheet** at https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/docs/factsheet/UI_Program_FactSheet.pdf.

During the time that you continue to receive your normal pay, you are not considered unemployed and would not be eligible for unemployment compensation.

In addition, by accepting the deferred resignation program, you separated voluntarily from your federal employment. See the response to [Q4](#). In all states, individuals who leave work voluntarily must have had good cause to do so to avoid being disqualified from receiving unemployment compensation. The definition of ‘good cause’ varies by state and an individual applying for unemployment compensation should consult the appropriate state statute, regulation, or policy for more specific information regarding the state’s good cause provisions.

All individuals are entitled to apply for unemployment compensation and the state UI agency will determine your eligibility.

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Q16: Will I be eligible for UC benefits if I file a claim at the conclusion of the deferred resignation period?

A16: See the response to [Q1](#) and [Q15](#).

Additionally, you must meet your state’s requirements for wages earned or time worked during an established period of time referred to as a “base period.” In most states, this is usually the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters prior to the time that your claim is filed. For example, if you file a claim in March 2025, the base period is October 2023 to September 2024.

Some states may also use an alternate base period if you don’t qualify for benefits using the standard base period. The alternate base period is usually the last four quarters immediately preceding the date you filed your unemployment compensation claim. For example, if you file in March 2025, the alternate base period is January 2024 to December 2024.

Reference [Q10](#) and [Q11](#) regarding which state UI agency to contact. For additional information on how each state determines monetary eligibility, you can visit: <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/uilawcompar/2023/monetary.pdf>.

If you had other non-federal work during the base period, you may be eligible to combine wages from your federal and non-federal employment on your claim. The state UI agency will make this determination.

E. CONTRACT WORKERS: ELIGIBILITY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

It is important that you provide accurate information, to the best of your ability, as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back benefits you received. Additionally, intentionally providing false information in order to collect unemployment compensation is fraud. This will result in penalties in addition to the requirement to repay any unemployment compensation you received.

Q17: I worked for an employer who had a contract with the Federal Government that was ended. What documents will I need to file for unemployment compensation?

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A17: The state UI agency will generally verify your identity at the time of filing. Additionally, the state UI agency will generally request that you provide details about your employment history for the last 18 months.

The state UI agency may reach out to you with follow-up questions, so please ensure your correct contact information is provided at the time of filing and kept up to date.

Q18: I worked for an employer who had a contract with the Federal Government. I did not have taxes taken out of my paycheck and I received an IRS Form 1099 at the end of the year. I was let go from my employment because the employer's contract with the Federal Government ended. Would I be eligible for unemployment compensation?

A18: Eligibility requirements for federal contractors are the same as for the regular UI program. While each state sets its own guidelines for eligibility of unemployment compensation, you usually qualify if you: (1) are unemployed through no fault of your own; (2) meet work and wage requirements; and (3) meet any additional state requirements. Please reference our **Unemployment Insurance Fact Sheet** at https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/docs/factsheet/UI_Program_FactSheet.pdf.

Generally, income received from self-employment or contract work is not considered when assessing if you meet the work and wage requirements to establish a claim.

All individuals are entitled to apply for unemployment compensation and the state UI agency will determine your eligibility.

Q19: I worked for an employer who had a contract with the Federal Government. I received an IRS Form W-2 at the end of the year. I was let go from my employment because the employer's contract with the Federal Government ended. Would I be eligible for unemployment compensation?

A19: Eligibility requirements for federal contractors are the same as for the regular UI program. While each state sets its own guidelines for eligibility of unemployment compensation, you usually qualify if you: (1) are unemployed through no fault of your own; (2) meet work and wage requirements; and (3) meet any additional state requirements. Please reference our **Unemployment**

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Insurance Fact Sheet at

https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/docs/factsheet/UI_Program_FactSheet.pdf.

The income reported on your IRS Form W-2 will generally be considered when assessing if you meet the work and wage requirements to establish a claim.

All individuals are entitled to apply for unemployment compensation and the state UI agency will determine your eligibility.

F. I FILED MY CLAIM: WHAT COMES NEXT?

It is important that you provide accurate information, to the best of your ability, as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back benefits you received. Additionally, intentionally providing false information in order to collect unemployment compensation is fraud. This will result in penalties in addition to the requirement to repay any unemployment compensation you received.

Q20: I was a federal employee, and I submitted my claim to the state UI agency, but I received a Monetary Determination Notice saying I do not have any wages and am not eligible.

A20: For former federal employees, it is normal for the unemployment claim to first appear ineligible (*e.g.*, receive a Monetary Determination Notice that shows a \$0 weekly benefit amount or doesn't include your federal employer) when you file. Federal employers do not report wage information to state UI agencies each quarter, as most other employers do.

Once you file your claim, the state UI agency will request wage and separation information from your federal employer to complete your claim. Upon receiving this information, the state UI agency will add the reported wages into the base period of your claim, as appropriate, and issue a revised Monetary Determination Notice. This is a manual process and requires more time than a regular state claim.

See the response to [Q14](#) regarding concerns about obtaining information from your federal employer. Given the volume of unemployment compensation claims being processed, states may require longer than normal processing times. During this time, be sure to continue filing your weekly certifications (see response to [Q25](#)).

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Once appropriate documentation is processed, the state will issue an updated Monetary Determination Notice that will include your federal wages and it will advise you of your weekly benefit amount and maximum benefit amount. Read all documents carefully to understand your rights and responsibilities.

Q21: I received my updated Monetary Determination Notice and am eligible for benefits. What happens next?

A21: It generally takes a few weeks after you file your claim to receive your first benefit payment as long as there are no other eligibility issue(s). If there are other eligibility issue(s) on your claim, the state UI agency may need to conduct further review. For example, if you were terminated from employment, the state UI agency will attempt to gather information from you, your former employer, and any other interested parties. Once this review is complete, the state UI agency will either pay benefits for any eligible weeks filed or will send you a Notice of Determination that explains why you are not eligible and provides you with information on how to appeal the decision.

Generally, state UI agencies have 21 days to resolve any issues preventing payment, but the volume of UI claims can impact this timeline. It is important to respond to any information requests from the state UI agency as soon as possible.

In addition, states require you to file weekly or biweekly claims (certification) to receive payment. These certifications continue throughout the life of your claim, even if you are not being paid while waiting on a nonmonetary determination or an appeal. Failure to complete the certifications can delay or prevent payment, and may result in additional eligibility issues, so it is very important to certify timely (see the response to [Q25](#)).

Q22: My claim was denied. Can I appeal?

A22: State UI agencies must offer you an opportunity for a fair hearing in the event a claim is denied. Your Notice of Determination will contain instructions on how to submit an appeal and the deadline to do so. It is important to continue to certify (see the response to [Q25](#)) during any appeal period if you are still unemployed. If a decision is made in your favor, you will be paid retroactively if no other denials exist on your claim.

Q23: What do I do when I find a job?

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A23: It is important to report any wages received when submitting your weekly or biweekly certifications. State law will determine to what extent your earnings from employment will impact your weekly benefits. The state agency will advise you on how to accurately report earnings and your return to work.

It is important that you provide accurate earnings information to the best of your ability as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back benefits you received. Additionally, intentionally providing false information in order to collect unemployment compensation is fraud. This will result in penalties in addition to the requirement to repay any unemployment compensation you received.

Q24: I received a payout for vacation pay from my federal employer when I separated. Am I still eligible for unemployment compensation?

A24: State law determines whether and to what extent vacation pay may disqualify you from receiving unemployment compensation for certain weeks. Some states prorate your vacation pay to specific weeks and, generally, an individual receiving vacation pay for an amount greater than or equal to their weekly benefit amount for a particular week is not eligible as they are not considered unemployed.

If you are denied benefits for a period of time because you received vacation pay from your federal employer, you may be eligible after the period for which the vacation payments are allocated. Consult the appropriate state statute, regulation, or policy for more specific information regarding the state's vacation pay provisions. For additional information on how each state addresses vacation pay, see **Table 5-20** at:

<https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/uilawcompar/2023/nonmonetary.pdf>.

Q25: What other eligibility requirements must I meet to remain eligible for compensation each week?

A25: State UI agencies require that you submit weekly or biweekly claims (certification) to receive payment. These certifications continue throughout the life of your claim, even if you are not being paid while waiting on a nonmonetary determination or an appeal. Failure to complete the certifications can delay or prevent payment, and may result in additional eligibility issues, so it is very important to certify timely. The state UI agency will provide instructions on how to submit your certifications.

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It is through the certification process that states assess whether you meet the criteria to continue to receive payment. Some of these criteria include:

- You must be able to work, actively looking for work and available to accept work, if offered, for each week you expect to be paid unemployment compensation. The state agency will instruct you on how and when to report your work search activities and register with the state's job service, if required. Failing to look for work each week could result in a denial of benefits for the week.
- If you worked or earned any income for the week, you must report any wages earned to the state UI agency. State law determines to what extent your weekly benefits are reduced due to earnings. Intentionally misrepresenting or failing to report earnings is fraud. This will result in penalties in addition to the requirement to repay any unemployment compensation you received.
- You may be required to report other types of payments you received for the week(s) such as: severance, vacation, holiday, pensions, disability, etc. State UI law will determine the types of payments that must be reported and the extent to which these types of payments would reduce your weekly benefit, if at all.
- You may also be asked to report if you have refused an offer of work or attending school.

Q26: What resources are available to me to help me find work?

A26: You can learn about a variety of programs that help individuals find employment, including résumé writing, job search workshops, career coaching, and apprenticeship programs, through American Job Centers located across the country. These services are available at no cost to you. Your state UI agency will have additional resources to assist you in finding new employment. To find more information about the American Job Center nearest you, please visit <https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/AmericanJobCenters/american-job-centers.aspx>.

Q27: Is unemployment compensation taxable?

A27: Yes. Unemployment compensation is considered taxable income. You will have the opportunity to elect to withhold income taxes from your weekly benefits

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when you file your claim. Consult a tax professional for specifics on your tax liability.