

### **Who is Eligible for Illinois Unemployment Benefits?**

- You are eligible if you:
  - A. Have earned \$1,600.00 total during your “base period”; \$440 must have been earned outside of your highest paid quarter;
    - Your “base period” consists of the four calendar quarters before a claim for benefits was filed.
    - If you worked part-time, you are eligible as long as you meet the income requirement.
    - If your hours were reduced, you are generally NOT eligible, but this may change.
  - B. Have become unemployed through no fault of your own;
    - Temporary layoffs due to COVID-19 are eligible, if:
      - You are confined to your home due to a COVID-19 diagnosis, or because you need to care for a spouse, parent, or child who’s been diagnosed with COVID-19;
      - You have had to leave work due to a child’s school closure;
      - NOT if you left work voluntarily due to concern about COVID-19;
      - NOT if you are receiving paid leave.
  - C. Are able and available to return to work.
    - You must register with the state employment service at Illinois JobLink ([www.IllinoisJobLink.com](http://www.IllinoisJobLink.com)) to show your availability, **UNLESS** you were temporarily laid off due to COVID-19– then you are **NOT** required to show your availability.
- **If you are a non-U.S. citizen, see Legal Aid Chicago’s “Unemployment Benefits in Illinois and non-U.S. citizens”.**

### **How are Benefits Calculated?**

- A weekly benefit amount is determined by:
  - Adding the amount of the two highest earning quarters from a base period;
  - Taking 47% of the total received from adding the two highest earning quarters; and
  - Dividing the result by 26.
- The maximum individual weekly unemployment benefit is currently \$484.00.
- Federal relief is currently providing an additional \$600 benefit per week through July 31, 2020. You do not need to apply separately for this benefit. You are eligible even if it is a larger amount than your weekly salary.
  - This benefit does not count as income for purposes of Medicaid or CHIP.
- Please note that other financial factors may affect your weekly benefit amount.

Contact **Legal Aid Chicago** at **(312) 341-1070** if you have any additional questions.

### **What is the Duration of Unemployment Benefits?**

- You may receive unemployment benefits for a total of 26 weeks.
- Federal relief currently provides for an additional 13 weeks of benefits resulting in 39 weeks of eligibility for Illinois residents who actively search for work. Flexibility will be provided where job searches are impacted by COVID-19. You do not need to apply separately for this benefit.

### **How are Unemployment Claims Filed?**

- Currently, you must submit your application using the online system at [www2.illinois.gov/ides/individuals/unemploymentinsurance](http://www2.illinois.gov/ides/individuals/unemploymentinsurance).
- You should be prepared to report past and current wages and to provide details on the reason for your separation from employment.

### **What to do if a Claim is Denied?**

- Appeal the denial of benefits within 30 days of the finding of ineligibility
- Forms and instructions are available through Illinois Legal Aid Online at [Illinoislegalaid.org/legal-information/appealing-ides-unemployment-decision](http://Illinoislegalaid.org/legal-information/appealing-ides-unemployment-decision)
- If you are interested in legal representation, apply at [legalaidchicago.org](http://legalaidchicago.org).

### **What if I have already exhausted my benefits, or the type of work I perform does not normally qualify for benefits?**

- Federal relief is currently providing benefits to workers who have exhausted their state benefits, or who do not normally qualify for state benefits.
- WHO is eligible:
  - Examples include independent contractors, freelancers, and those who do not have a long-enough work history to qualify for state benefits;
  - You must be partially or fully unemployed OR unable and unavailable because of a COVID-19 diagnosis (your own, a household member, or someone you care for), your place of employment closed because of COVID-19, or you are scheduled but unable to start new employment due to COVID-19.
- WHAT you are entitled to:
  - Up to 39 weeks of benefits through December 31, 2020, which can be applied retroactively;
  - Minimum benefit of at least one-half the state's average weekly benefit, as well as the \$600 weekly benefit provided by the Federal Government through PUC.
- HOW to apply:
  - File an application for Illinois unemployment benefits and your eligibility for federal relief will be automatically considered.

*Updated April 2020. Please note the information contained here is not exhaustive, not intended as legal advice, and cannot substitute for independent analysis and research in any specific case. For legal advice, please contact Legal Aid Chicago at (312)341-1070.*

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