

Department of Labor and Workforce Development

LABOR DEPARTMENT POSTS GUIDE TO HELP UNEMPLOYED WORKERS CLAIM WEEKLY BENEFITS

TRENTON – The New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development has posted step-by-step instructions for the more than 550,000 workers who will go online to claim their weekly unemployment benefits starting Sunday.

Workers must certify their eligibility and availability for work each week in order to continue receiving benefits, in accordance with federal labor department rules, and the Labor Department strongly encourages them to do so online at myunemployment.nj.gov. Certifying in New Jersey means answering seven questions, and attesting to the truthfulness of the answers. Failure to answer all of the questions correctly results in a delay of benefits.

"Applying for unemployment can be complicated, so this guide takes workers step-by-step through claiming their weekly benefits," said Labor Commissioner Robert Asaro-Angelo. "As soon as it became clear new unemployment recipients were hitting a snag, the Department created easier-to-understand instructions."

Half of the errors happen on the first three questions, by claimants saying they are not available for or actively seeking work, or mistakenly saying they refused available work.

Workers should answer "yes" to Question 1 if they were physically able to work before losing their job due to the coronavirus, are out of work temporarily and expect to return to their job, or are able and available for work.

Those who are waiting to be recalled to their current job, or are delaying their job search until the national emergency subsides, should answer "yes" to Question 2.

On Question 3, workers should say "no," unless they have refused work.

Workers should also read Question 4 carefully, and should say "no" unless they have obtained Unemployment Insurance-approved student status.

Besides those answering questions incorrectly, workers who are self-employed, independent contractors and others not usually eligible for unemployment will not be able to claim state benefits. These workers likely are eligible for federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), a program the Labor Department is working to bring online in New Jersey, and will be available soon.

For now, the first step for self-employed workers, independent contractors and others not usually eligible for unemployment is to apply for state benefits and be denied. They will hear from the Labor Department soon on next steps to take to claim their federal benefits.

More information on federal PUA benefits for independent contractors can be found [here](#).

Every worker who is eligible for unemployment will also receive a supplemental \$600 weekly benefit through the end of July, regardless of the amount of their regular unemployment payment.

It's important to note that workers who voluntarily quit a job, are not actively seeking work or who refuse work are not eligible to collect unemployment.

For workers who have been approved for benefits, instructions on how to complete the weekly certification can be found here:

<https://myunemployment.nj.gov/labor/myunemployment/covidinstructions.shtml>
