

COVID-19 Employee FAQs

What is the Minimum Earnings Requirement to qualify for benefits?

In order to be eligible for unemployment insurance benefits, you must meet the minimum earnings requirement from insured work during the base period (time period of employment used to evaluate your claim). For 2020, the minimum earnings requirement is \$4,324. The minimum earnings requirement is adjusted annually. In addition to meeting the minimum earnings requirement, you must also have been paid at least \$1,850 in one quarter of the base period and \$800 in another quarter. Wages must be earned from employers required to pay unemployment insurance taxes (insured employers).
NESL: 48-627(5)(b)

Can you look at my claim to be sure I entered it correctly?

We recommend you go to your claims summary screen to see if the claim you filed exists. The instructions/guidance information is also located here: dol.nebraska.gov/UIBenefits.

Another option would be to visit your local American Job Center where a representative can assist you. Wait times are long due to the unprecedented events, so you may want to call ahead.

If there are any issues with your claim, they will show up on the claim summary screen, and a claims adjudicator will contact you to discuss them further. We are addressing claims in the order they were received.

How do I update my wage information after I've submitted my claim?

You will be able to update demographic information on your account, however once you have submitted your claim you will not be able to update wage data. If you have changes that need to be made, you can send a detailed email of those changes to NDOL.UnemploymentHelp@nebraska.gov.

The government said I would receive \$600 per week. Is this true?

We do not have a timeframe for when the \$600 will be distributed, but all individuals who are eligible for any unemployment benefit in Nebraska will also receive an additional \$600 per week on top of their weekly benefit amount. In the meantime, please continue to file your weekly certifications. Once further federal guidance is available, the \$600 will be retroactively paid on all eligible weeks claimed. The additional payment is for weeks beginning March 29, 2020 through July 31, 2020.

For updates, check this link regularly: dol.nebraska.gov/PressRelease/Details/141

When filing for unemployment, do I need a doctor's note if my work place is still open?

If a workplace is operating during COVID-19, workers should provide a doctor's note when filing for unemployment. The note must explain what work you can perform.

I am self employed, do I qualify for benefits? Do I file as an employer or employee?

If you are self employed or a gig employer you will need to file an unemployment claim for benefits. If you are denied regular unemployment benefits a judgment will be made to determine eligibility for new federal unemployment programs.

The company I work for is allowing me to choose to stay home. Do I still qualify for Unemployment Benefits?

We cannot provide guidance without all of the facts. If you are not working, you may file for Unemployment Benefits. If your employer indicates a different separation reason than lack of work, the claim will be reviewed by an adjudicator and processed according to Nebraska Employment Security Laws and Regulations.

Do I qualify for Unemployment Benefits if I have to quarantine for 2 weeks?

We recommend that you file a claim to begin the process of having your claim adjudicated/determined. These claims are not backdated, so we encourage everyone to file and allow the process to begin. If it is determined you are eligible, you will receive a determination. In the meantime, you must also file weekly certifications each week while you are not working.

If you receive any paid leave while you are under quarantine, from your employer, you must report that during your weekly certification as well.

I run a home daycare. Do I qualify for unemployment?

We recommend that you file a claim, to begin the process of having your claim adjudicated/determined. These claims are not backdated, so we encourage everyone to file and allow to begin the process. If it is determined you are eligible, you will receive a determination. In the meantime, you must also file weekly certifications each week while you are not working.

Where do I go to file an Unemployment Insurance claim?

Claimants must go online to [NEworks.nebraska.gov](https://neworks.nebraska.gov) to file their claims.

If you do not have access to a computer, you can visit a local American Job Center where a representative can assist you. Due to unprecedented events, wait times are long. We suggest calling ahead to make an appointment.

I was supposed to receive some documents for my benefits that I need and haven't received. What do I do?

Many of the documents sent to claimants are sent via their preferred method, as indicated on their account. If your preference is email, the documents could be in your Spam file. If your preference is message center, then check your message center daily for updated documents. If US mail, you may want to confirm that your mailing address is current.

Can my employer force me to work from home?

Yes

Can my employer cut my hours?

Yes, an employer can require you to work less hours, more hours, or hours outside of your typical schedule.

Can my employer advance me PTO and require me to use it?

Yes. Additionally, if you are advanced PTO/vacation and are paid for it then choose to leave the company before you have earned the advance, the employer could make a deduction from your wages in order to recoup the advance.

Can my employer require me to use PTO/vacation/sick leave?

Yes, an employer can dictate when you have to use leave. An employer can also deny the use of leave.

If I am laid off does that mean I am guaranteed my job back at some point?

No. Nebraska is an employment at will state. Both the employer and employee can terminate employment at any time without notice.

Can my employer pick and choose who to lay off/send home?

Yes, as long as there is no discrimination based on a protected class (race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including pregnancy), disability, marital status, or age).

Can my employer send me home if I've been sneezing/coughing?

Yes

Can my employer require to me to do to the doctor and not return until I have a note?

Yes

Does my employer have to pay me if I've been sent home?

No. Your employer is only required to pay you for the time in which you are you working. If you are salary exempt employee we recommend contacting the USDOL as the answer may be different for you.

Can my employer check my temperature at work?

Yes. Typically, there are ADA protections in place that would not allow employers to check employee's temperatures because it is considered part of a medical examination. However, the ADA has guidance on requirements when we are in a pandemic. When a pandemic is declared employers may measure employees temperatures without violating ADA guidelines.