



Unemployment in Virginia & COVID-19 - FAQs

*Please note that things are subject to change as more information is released.
Updated 3.31.20.*

Who qualifies for unemployment?

- If you have been out of work at least one (1) full day without pay and are not currently utilizing any paid time off options
- If you've received a reduction in hours and your gross earnings are less than your weekly benefit amount (current VA max is \$378)

Where do I go to file for unemployment for the first time?

- Individuals filing for Unemployment Insurance (UI) should do so via the following:
 - **ONLINE:** with the *Virginia Workforce Connection* at <https://www.vawc.virginia.gov/vosnet/Default.aspx>
 - **PHONE:** Call 1-866-832-2363 (M-F between 8:15a and 4:30p). Note, this number is just for new claims.

How do I file for unemployment?

- Upon arriving at the VAWC's website click on the blue box labeled "UNEMPLOYED - Complete your UI claim".

- Before you complete your claim, you'll need to have the following information with you:
 - Your Social Security Number (SSN)
 - Your employer's name, address, telephone number and dates of all employment within the last 18 months
 - If you belong to a union, the name and local number of your union hall
 - Your Alien Registration number if you are not a U.S. citizen
 - How you'd like to receive your payment
 - VA Debit Card
 - Direct Deposit
 - You'll need the Routing number (the first 9 digits at the bottom of your checks) and the Account number (the second set of digits at the bottom of your checks)

How long will this process take?

- Filing for UI will take approximately 45-60 minutes as you convey the necessary information
- **NOTE:** If filing via phone, call times are longer due to the large amount of folks filing.

What reason do I give when it asks why I've separated from this company?

- For those who are filing because of the separation due to COVID-19, select **Laid Off / Reduction in Force**

What makes COVID-19 filing different from any other time?

- Because of the mass amounts of folks who've been either laid off or had hours of work reduced due to the virus, special provisions are being made all across the country.
- In Virginia, Governor Northam has declared the following:
 - That the regular one week waiting period to receive benefits is suspended.
 - Also, that the regular requirement to conduct a weekly job search is also suspended.
 - This went into effect on March 15, 2020.

What happens after I file?

- You'll receive a few pieces of documentation that explain your eligibility requirements, and what you need to do each week to claim your benefits, as well as how much UI you will be awarded as a whole and your weekly benefit.
- You'll also receive a PIN. You'll need this for your weekly claims and for any questions you may have.

When can I expect to see my first UI payment?

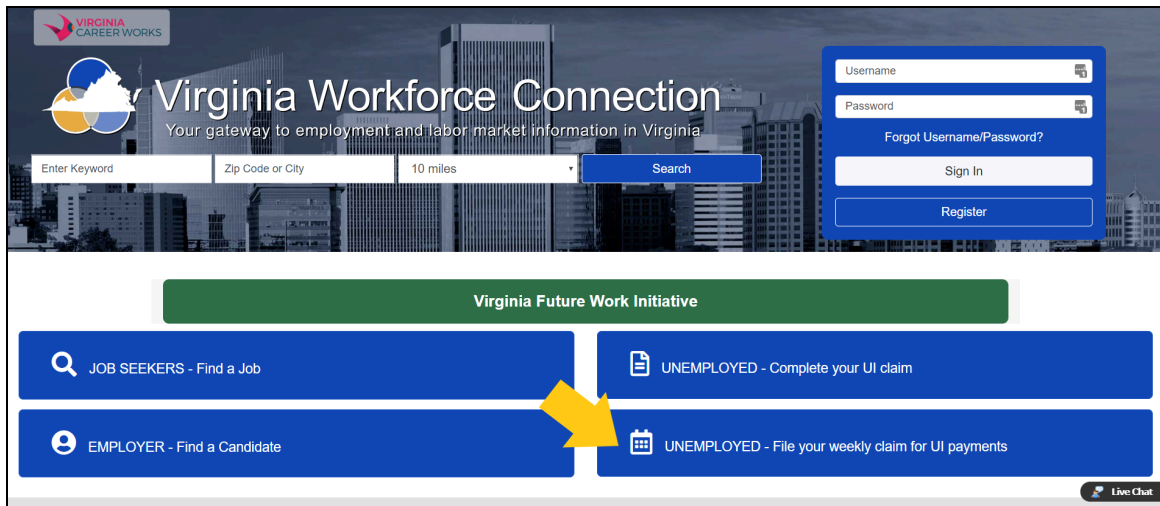
- Your first payment should be available to you the following week after you've filed your claim.
- For example, you filed for unemployment on Monday, March 30th. One week later, on April 6th, when you make your weekly claim, you'll then receive your UI benefits (funds) for the previous week, March 30 - April 3.
- It may take approximately three (3) days for the benefits payment to process. Following the above example, this means that the payment should hit your account on Thursday, April 9th.

Wait, you said Governor Northam suspended the one week waiting period? How come I still have to wait an entire week to receive my benefits?

- You **cannot** receive UI benefits for time that has not occurred yet, as the above example demonstrates.
- In a case of filing where COVID-19 is not the reason, an individual claim would have a one week waiting period, then the weekly claim, and then the amount would be available, so in essence it would be two (2) weeks before you would see payment.

You mentioned “weekly claims”, what does that mean?

- Just because you filed for UI, that doesn’t mean that the funds automatically just come to you.
- You need to, on a weekly basis, go in and make a “weekly claim”. This means that you’re requesting your UI benefits for the previous week. You’ll need to do this for each week that you’re unemployed.
- **ONLINE:** Go to the *Virginia Workforce Connection* main page, click on the blue box marked “UNEMPLOYED - File your weekly claim for UI payments”. You’ll need to answer a few simple questions and then submit your claim for the previous week. It should only take about 15 minutes or so.



- **PHONE:** Call 1-800-897-5630, answer a few simple questions and submit your claim. Again, please note that call times take a bit longer due to the amount of claims being filed at this time. Note that this number is for making weekly claims only.
- **TIP:** *Because you may be teleworking and the days may begin to run together, set yourself a calendar reminder for each Monday to make your weekly claim.*

How much will I receive?

- In times of regular unemployment, the amount you receive is:
 - Based on your wages from the last year
 - Can last anywhere from 12-26 weeks
 - Current max per week is \$378 and the minimum is \$60
- Under the expanded UI benefits with the [CARES Act](#) in response to the COVID-19 crisis, you will receive:
 - In addition to your regular UI benefits, **an additional \$600/week** for up to 12 weeks
 - An extension of your regular UI benefits for an additional 13 weeks
- Because each individual case is different, the final monetary amount determined will vary from person to person
- **NOTE:** *Currently, the state of Virginia is working on implementing the CARES Act provisions based upon guidance from the federal government.*

RESOURCES:

- [Q&A on Claims Related to Coronavirus](#) [Virginia Employment Commission]
- [FAQ's - General Unemployment Insurance](#) [Virginia Employment Commission]
- [Community Awareness Podcast: How to File Unemployment Insurance During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#) [Virginia Career Works]