



Common Questions About Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation

Am I eligible for unemployment compensation?

According to the Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry handbook, to be considered eligible for compensation, you must meet these requirements:

- You are able to work and available for suitable work.
- You are registered for work with the Pennsylvania CareerLink.
- You earned enough wages to qualify and have sufficient credit weeks.
- You performed services covered by the UC Law for an employer that is required by the UC Law or elects to pay into the UC Fund.
- You are unemployed through no fault of your own or due to a work stoppage that is the result of a lockout.
- You have filed an initial application for UC benefits.
- You are unemployed for a waiting period of one week after filing the initial application for benefits.

You should file an initial application to determine if you are eligible.

Can I get Partial Benefits?

If your regular work hours are reduced because of lack of work, you may be able to receive partial benefits. It is important that you report all wages paid or payable, regardless of whether these wages exceed the partial benefit credit. If you don't, you may be disqualified from receiving benefits or you may be subject to fine or imprisonment.

How long can I collect benefits?

Most employees who remain eligible may receive benefit checks for up to 26 weeks of total unemployment during their Benefit Year, the 52-week period that begins with the date of their application. Some claimants are not entitled to the full 26 weeks of benefits because they did not work enough credit weeks, or weeks in which they earned at least a certain amount of money, in their base year. There is a federally mandated program which extends unemployment benefits when the percentage of jobless workers covered by unemployment insurance reaches a certain level. The program provides eight or 13 more weeks of benefits for Pennsylvania's unemployed who qualify. You must report to the Office of Employment Security each week to sign up for weekly checks.

How is the Amount Determined?

The general goal is to pay the unemployed person about 50 percent of what he or she earned when employed, up to the maximum allowed by state law. The maximum varies each year, being based on a percentage of the average weekly wages for all workers in the state during the last fiscal year. Allowances for dependents may also be made. A dependent spouse is your lawful husband or wife living in your household. A dependent child is your unmarried child (including illegitimate children), stepchild or adopted child under 18 years old, or a child 18 years or over who is unable to engage in any gainful employment because of a physical or mental handicap. In order to receive dependent's allowances, you must have been providing more than one-half of the cost of support for your dependent(s) at the time of your application for benefits.

What will disqualify me?

You may be denied benefits for a number of reasons. Some of the more common ones include:

- quitting your job without a necessary or compelling reason.
- loss of job due to intentional misconduct – generally on the job misconduct.
- failure to apply for or accept suitable work.
- inability or unavailability to work.
- refusal to accept an offer of suitable full-time work in order to pursue seasonal or part-time employment.
- receipt of unemployment compensation from another state or from the federal government.

Although you may have been determined disqualified, many times an experienced employment lawyer can appeal the initial decision to the Referee and obtain the benefits you deserve.