

## Unemployment Updates due to COVID-19

**3/18/20** <https://www.virginia.gov/coronavirus-updates/>

Governor Northam announced the following actions to protect working Virginians impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak:

- **No waiting for unemployment benefits.** Governor Northam has directed the Commissioner of the Virginia Employment Commission to waive the one-week waiting period to ensure workers can receive benefits as soon as possible.
- **Enhanced eligibility for unemployment.** Workers may be eligible to receive unemployment benefits if an employer needs to temporarily slow or cease operations due to COVID-19. If a worker has been issued a notice to self-quarantine by a medical or public health official and is not receiving paid sick or medical leave from their employer, they may be eligible to receive unemployment benefits. In addition, a worker may be eligible for unemployment benefits if they must stay home to care for an ill family member and are not receiving paid family medical leave from their employer.
- **Fewer restrictions.** For individuals receiving unemployment insurance, Governor Northam is directing the Virginia Employment Commission to give affected workers special consideration on deadlines, mandatory re-employment appointments, and work search requirements.

The Office of the Governor is providing a [Frequently Asked Questions guide](#) for workers that have been temporarily laid off or discharged during this public health crisis.

**3/18/20** <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/>

If you are a worker who has been totally or partially separated from your job due to Coronavirus, please note that no claim for unemployment insurance may be filed or processed until an actual lay off from employment has occurred, or until there has been an actual reduction in hours. When filing your claim for unemployment benefits, please be sure to check the reason for separation as Lack of Work/Lay off. If you will be filing because of a reduction in hours, you will not receive benefits unless your gross earnings are less than your weekly benefit amount.

The program now applies to workers who are out of work because they are:

- quarantined, either on their own initiative or at the direction of a medical official
- caring for a family member who is ill or under quarantine
- caring for a child whose school or day care was closed

**3/28/20** *The CARES Act, federal legislation to expand eligibility for unemployment insurance, has become law. Virginia will receive guidance from the United States Department of Labor about how to implement the provisions of the law. After VEC receives that guidance, it will be posted on their website and they will begin implementing the new provisions.*

**3/28/20** There are reports of scammers attempting to defraud users applying for unemployment insurance. Please make sure you are on this site, [www.vec.virginia.gov](http://www.vec.virginia.gov) or [www.vawc.virginia.gov](http://www.vawc.virginia.gov) when applying for benefits.

## Q&A on Claims Related to Coronavirus

3/21/20 <http://www.vec.virginia.gov/>

### **UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE PROCEDURES IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19**

**Q. When should I file a claim for unemployment compensation benefits?**

**A.** You should file your claim on-line (\*\*preferred method) through our Website at [www.vec.virginia.gov](http://www.vec.virginia.gov) after you have been out of work at least 1 full day. If you do not have access to a computer, you can file your claim through our Customer Contact Center by calling [866-832-2363](tel:866-832-2363) Monday through Friday 8:15am – 4:30pm. Your claim will be effective Sunday of the week in which you submit your on-line application or file through our Customer Contact Center.

**Q. My hours have been reduced. Can I apply for unemployment compensation benefits?**

**A.** You can file due to a reduction in hours. If your gross earnings are less than your weekly benefit amount. Currently, the maximum weekly benefit amount in Virginia is \$378.

**Q. What happens after I complete my unemployment insurance application?**

**A.** Once your claim is processed by the VEC, you will receive three important documents. The Benefit Rights document explains eligibility requirements and what you need to do each week to claim your benefits. The Monetary Determination document shows how much money you may be eligible to receive. You will also receive a PIN. You need the PIN to claim weekly benefits and to make inquiries about your claim.

**Q. How much money will I qualify to receive?**

**A.** Depending on your earnings, your benefit amount may range from a minimum of \$60 per week for 12 weeks to a maximum of \$378 a week for 26 weeks. (Refer to your Monetary Determination)

**Q. How soon before I can expect a benefit payment?**

**A.** Beginning with claims effective March 15, 2020, Governor Northam has directed that the one week waiting period and the requirement to conduct a weekly job search both be suspended for those receiving unemployment insurance benefits. If you are eligible for benefits, a payment should be processed shortly after you claim your first full week. You will need to refer to the Benefit Rights document for instructions on claiming weekly benefits.