

US Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
Unemployment Insurance (UI)

Questions and Answers for Federal Employees and Contractors

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) program is administered by state UI agencies and provides a weekly amount to eligible individuals while they are in between jobs – functioning as an economic stabilizer to provide temporary and partial replacement of wages.¹ Reference **Q2** about the amount of weekly benefits and number of weeks for which you might be eligible.

For additional details, please visit <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/unemcomp.asp>. Individuals who are separated from their job can apply for UI benefits by contacting their state UI agency. You may find your state UI agency at <https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/UnemploymentBenefits/unemployment-benefits.aspx>. Reference **Q10** and **Q11** regarding which state UI agency to contact.

You can also get free employment assistance at any American Job Center (AJC). AJC staff can help you look for work and offer job search workshops, free computer access, and more. To find a location near you, please visit <https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/AmericanJobCenters/american-job-centers.aspx>.

¹ For purposes of this document, amounts paid under the regular UI program, Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE), and Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX) are referred to as “UI benefits” throughout.

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A. FEDERAL EMPLOYEES: ELIGIBILITY FOR UI BENEFITS

For general information regarding UI benefits for federal civilians (e.g., Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees or UCFE) and any other UI program, please visit <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/aboutui.asp>. This includes a link to the **UCFE Fact Sheet** found at https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/docs/factsheet/UCFE_FactSheet.pdf.

It is important that you provide accurate information, to the best of your ability, as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back the benefits you received. The most important thing is to be honest. If you intentionally make false statements or hide information to gain or maintain UI benefits, you are committing fraud. If you are confused about what you are supposed to do or report, contact the state UI agency for clarification.

Q1: I was recently separated from a civilian position with the Federal Government. Am I eligible for UI benefits?

A1: Eligibility requirements for federal civilian employees are the same as for the regular UI program. While each state sets its own guidelines for eligibility of UI benefits, you usually qualify if you: (1) are unemployed through no fault of your own; (2) meet work and wage requirements; and (3) meet any additional state requirements. Please reference our **Unemployment Insurance Fact Sheet** at https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/docs/factsheet/UI_Program_FactSheet.pdf.

All individuals are entitled to apply for UI benefits and the state UI agency will determine your eligibility.

Q2: If I am eligible for UI benefits, how much will I receive?

A2: Each state sets its own guidelines for eligibility of UI benefits and the amount an individual may receive. Reference [Q10](#) and [Q11](#) to identify which state to file a claim with.

For a quick snapshot of how each state computes benefit amounts, as well as the minimum and maximum amounts available, please reference the most recent **Significant Provisions of State Unemployment Insurance Laws** at <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/sigpros/2020-2029/January2025.pdf>. After you apply, the state UI agency will send you a Monetary Determination Notice that includes your official weekly benefit amount and the number of weeks

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for which you may be eligible for benefits. Reference Section **[G. I FILED MY CLAIM: WHAT COMES NEXT?](#)**.

Q3: I was not employed very long with the Federal Government when I separated. Am I eligible for UI benefits?

A3: See the response to **[Q1](#)** for general eligibility information.

To qualify for UI benefits, you must have earned sufficient wages during an established period of time referred to as a “base period.” In most states, this is usually the first four of the last five completed calendar quarters prior to the time that your claim is filed. For example, if you file a claim in October 2025, the base period is July 2024 to June 2025.

Some states may also use an alternate base period if you don’t qualify for benefits using the standard base period. The alternate base period is usually the last four quarters immediately preceding the date you filed your claim. For example, if you file a claim in October 2025, the alternate base period is October 2024 to September 2025.

Reference **[Q10](#)** and **[Q11](#)** regarding which state UI agency to contact. For additional information on how each state determines monetary eligibility, see **Table 3-2** at:

<https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/uilawcompar/2023/monetary.pdf>.

Q4: My agency reported that I was separated because of poor performance. Am I eligible for UI benefits?

A4: See the response to **[Q1](#)** for general eligibility information. The state UI agency will ask you to provide additional details regarding your separation and will also contact the agency from which you were separated. Provide accurate information to the best of your knowledge and be prepared to include supporting documentation, where available. The state UI agency may reach out to you with follow-up questions, so please ensure your contact information is correct when filing your claim and is kept up to date.

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Q5: My agency reported that I was separated because continued employment was not in the public interest. Am I eligible for UI benefits?

A5: See the response to [Q1](#) and [Q4](#).

Q6: I was separated because I was a probationary employee. Am I eligible for UI benefits?

A6: See the response to [Q1](#) and [Q3](#) regarding general eligibility requirements, including state work and wage requirements.

Additionally, the state UI agency will ask you to provide additional details regarding your separation and will also contact the agency from which you were separated. Provide accurate information to the best of your knowledge and be prepared to include supporting documentation, where available. The state UI agency may reach out to you with follow-up questions, so please ensure your contact information is correct when filing your claim and is kept up to date.

All individuals are entitled to apply for UI benefits and the state UI agency will determine your eligibility.

Q7: I have been teleworking most or all days of the week and my agency directed me to report to an office full-time. If I refuse to return to the office, am I eligible for UI benefits?

A7: See the response to [Q1](#) for general eligibility information. Refusal to return to the office raises an eligibility issue that will need to be resolved by the state before benefits can be paid. The state will conduct an investigation and determine the reason for the separation. State laws vary, but all state laws require that to be eligible for benefits, your unemployment has to be through no fault of your own.

The state UI agency may reach out to you with follow-up questions, so please ensure your contact information is correct when filing your claim and is kept up to date.

Q8: My agency placed me on administrative leave. Am I eligible for UI benefits?

A8: During the time that you continue to receive your normal pay, you are not considered unemployed and would not be eligible for UI benefits. If you are later

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terminated or at the end of the administrative leave period, you might qualify for UI benefits. See the response to [Q1](#) for general eligibility information.

Q9: How do I know if I qualify for UI benefits?

A9: Please reference our **Unemployment Insurance Fact Sheet** at https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/docs/factsheet/UI_Program_FactSheet.pdf.

After you apply, the state UI agency will send you a Monetary Determination Notice that includes your weekly benefit amount and the number of weeks for which you may be eligible for benefits. Please note that because the state UI agency will also reach out to your former employer, this process may take a few weeks. For former federal employees, see also the response to [Q21](#).

Additionally, there may be an eligibility issue(s) on your claim that requires further review by the state UI agency. For example, if you were terminated from employment, the state UI agency will attempt to gather information from you, your former employer, and any other interested parties. Once this review is complete, the state UI agency will either pay benefits for any eligible weeks filed or will send you a Notice of Determination that explains why you are not eligible and provides you with information on how to appeal the decision. Make sure to complete any weekly claim certifications provided by the state while the determination of eligibility is pending (see the response to [Q26](#)).

B. WHERE TO FILE A CLAIM

Each state operates its own UI program. Many require you to file for UI benefits online and some provide toll-free numbers or other ways to obtain assistance in filing. To view contact information for each state, please visit

<https://www.careeronestop.org/localhelp/unemploymentbenefits/unemployment-benefits.aspx>.

You may not receive benefits from more than one state at the same time. It is important that you provide accurate information, to the best of your ability, as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back the benefits you received. The most important thing is to be honest. If you intentionally make false statements or hide information to gain or maintain UI benefits, you are committing fraud. If you are confused about what you are supposed to do or report, contact the state UI agency for clarification.

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Q10: Where should I file my UI claim as a former federal employee?

A10: You should file your claim in the state where your last official duty station was located (as noted on your most recent Standard Form 50 (SF-50)). There are two exceptions to this:

1. If you had employment after separation from your federal employer: The UI claim is filed in the state of last employment. For example, your official duty station was Washington, DC, and you were separated from your federal employment on February 13, 2025. You continue to have a part time job in Maryland as of March 1, 2025. Since you worked in Maryland after your separation from your federal job in Washington, DC, you would file your claim with the Maryland UI agency.
2. If your last duty station was outside of the United States: The UI claim is filed with the UI agency in the state where you reside. For example, your last official duty station was in Germany. When you separated from federal service, you returned home to Georgia. You would file your claim in Georgia, since that is the state in which you reside.

Q11: I worked from home, but my official duty station (listed on my SF-50) was in a different state. Where do I file my UI claim?

A11: Generally, your UI claim is filed in the state of your last official duty station as listed on your SF-50 (reference the response to [Q10](#) for some exceptions).

Example 1: John lives in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and reports to his duty station (as listed on his SF-50) in Dallas, Texas, two days each pay period. John would file his claim with the UI agency in Texas.

Example 2: Cathy lives in Providence, Rhode Island. She was hired as a remote worker for the Department of Labor in Washington, DC, and has always worked out of her home. Her SF-50 identifies her duty station as her home address. Cathy would file her claim with the UI agency in Rhode Island.

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C. DOCUMENTATION NEEDED TO FILE A CLAIM

It is important that you provide accurate information, to the best of your ability, as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back the benefits you received. The most important thing is to be honest. If you intentionally make false statements or hide information to gain or maintain UI benefits, you are committing fraud. If you are confused about what you are supposed to do or report, contact the state UI agency for clarification.

Q12: What documents will I need to file for UI benefits?

A12: The state UI agency will generally verify your identity at the time of filing. Additionally, the state UI agency will generally request that you provide information on any other non-federal employment history for the last 18 months (this includes the name and address of all employers you worked for during the last 18 months and contact information for those employers).

The state UI agency may reach out to you with follow-up questions, so please ensure your correct contact information is provided at the time of filing and notify the state right away if your contact information changes.

If you were a federal employee, be prepared to also provide copies of the following documents:

- SF-50, *Notification of Personnel Action*, and
- SF-8, *Notice to Federal Employee About Unemployment Insurance* form.

The state UI agency may also request that you complete an affidavit using earnings and leave statements, W-2 forms, and/or other types of documentation that can establish that you were a federal employee and have worked and earned sufficient wages to qualify for UI benefits. Be prepared to provide these documents if requested.

Q13: What do I do if I did not receive a copy of my SF-8 or SF-50 before being separated?

A13: The SF-8 is used primarily by state UI agencies to identify the federal identification code (FIC) and mailing address to send wage and separation

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requests to the separating federal agency. If you do not have your SF-8, you may find your agency's FIC at <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/unemcomp.asp> for use when filing your claim.

If you were recently separated from your federal job, contact your former agency's personnel office to find out how you can obtain a copy of your SF-50. If it has been some time since you were separated, contact the National Personnel Records Center through the National Archives at <https://www.archives.gov/personnel-records-center/civilian-non-archival>.

The state UI agency may also request that you complete an affidavit using earnings and leave statements, W-2 forms, and/or other types of documentation that can establish that you were a federal employee and have worked and earned sufficient wages to qualify for UI benefits. So also have these documents available in case they are requested.

Q14: I am concerned that the state UI agency will be unable to obtain information from my former employer. What does this mean for my UI claim?

A14: Once you file your claim, the state UI agency will request wage and separation information from your federal employer to complete your claim (see response to [Q21](#)).

To supplement the employer's information and/or to make a decision with the best available information if the federal employer does not respond timely, the state agency may request you to submit copies of any of the following documents to complete your claim: SF-8, SF-50, W-2, recent earnings and leave statements, etc. Follow instructions provided by the state agency at the time of filing or instructions provided to you after you have filed your claim (e.g., instructions on your Monetary Determination Notice). States may provide multiple options for you to submit these documents such as upload to the state's UI portal, fax or in person at a local American Job Center. Many states use automated systems to request information.

Given the volume of UI claims being processed, states may require longer than normal processing times. During this time, be sure to continue filing your weekly certifications (see response to [Q26](#)).

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The state UI agency may reach out to you with follow-up questions, so please ensure your correct contact information is provided at the time of filing and notify the state right away if your contact information changes.

D. DEFERRED RESIGNATION PROGRAM (DRP): ELIGIBILITY FOR UI BENEFITS

It is important that you provide accurate information, to the best of your ability, as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back the benefits you received. The most important thing is to be honest. If you intentionally make false statements or hide information to gain or maintain UI benefits, you are committing fraud. If you are confused about what you are supposed to do or report, contact the state UI agency for clarification.

Q15: I accepted the deferred resignation program, will I be eligible for UI benefits after my official separation date?

A15: See the response to [Q1](#) for general eligibility information. During the time that you continue to receive your normal pay, you are not considered unemployed and would not be eligible for UI benefits.

By accepting the deferred resignation program, you separated voluntarily from your federal employment. This raises an eligibility issue that the state must resolve before benefits can be paid. The state UI agency will ask you to provide additional details regarding your separation and will also contact the agency from which you were separated. Provide accurate information to the best of your knowledge and be prepared to include supporting documentation, where available. The state UI agency may reach out to you with follow-up questions, so please ensure your contact information is correct when filing your claim and is kept up to date.

In all states, individuals who leave work voluntarily must have had good cause to do so to avoid being disqualified from receiving UI benefits. The definition of ‘good cause’ varies by state and an individual applying for UI benefits should consult the appropriate state statute, regulation, or policy for more specific information regarding the state’s good cause provisions.

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Q16: Will I be eligible for UI benefits if I file a claim at the conclusion of the deferred resignation period?

A16: See the response to [Q1](#) and [Q3](#) regarding general eligibility requirements, including state work and wage requirements and [Q15](#) for information related to the deferred resignation program. Also reference [Q25](#) if you received vacation pay.

Reference [Q10](#) and [Q11](#) regarding which state UI agency to contact. For additional information on how each state determines monetary eligibility, see **Table 3-2 at:**
<https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/uilawcompar/2023/monetary.pdf>

Q17: I accepted the deferred resignation program. My agency offered me the chance to return to work and I declined. Am I eligible for UI benefits?

A17: You must report the offer to the state UI agency as this could affect your eligibility for UI benefits. The state UI agency will gather information from you and your former federal employer on the reason(s) why you chose not to return to work to determine whether your refusal is disqualifying under the state's law.

E. CONTRACT WORKERS: ELIGIBILITY FOR UI BENEFITS

It is important that you provide accurate information, to the best of your ability, as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back the benefits you received. The most important thing is to be honest. If you intentionally make false statements or hide information to gain or maintain UI benefits, you are committing fraud. If you are confused about what you are supposed to do or report, contact the state UI agency for clarification.

Q18: I worked for an employer who had a contract with the Federal Government that was ended. What documents will I need to file for UI benefits?

A18: The state UI agency will generally verify your identity at the time of filing. Additionally, the state UI agency will generally request that you provide details about your employment history for the last 18 months, including the name and address of your former employer as well as contact information for your supervisor or someone in human resources who can provide details about the reason you separated from the company.

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The state UI agency may reach out to you with follow-up questions, so please ensure your correct contact information is provided at the time of filing and notify the state right away if your contact information changes.

Q19: I worked for an employer who had a contract with the Federal Government. I did not have taxes taken out of my paycheck and I received an IRS Form 1099 at the end of the year. I was let go from my employment because the employer's contract with the Federal Government ended. Would I be eligible for UI benefits?

A19: Eligibility depends on your employment status. Generally, individuals who receive an IRS form 1099 and do not have taxes taken out of their pay are classified as independent contractors (or self-employed) and income received from this work is not considered when assessing if you meet the work and wage requirements to establish a regular claim. However, all unemployed individuals have the right to file for UI benefits. The state will determine if you meet the requirements to receive benefits after you apply. See the response to [Q1](#) for general eligibility information.

Q20: I worked for an employer who had a contract with the Federal Government. I received an IRS Form W-2 at the end of the year. I was let go from my employment because the employer's contract with the Federal Government ended. Would I be eligible for UI benefits?

A20: Eligibility requirements for federal contractors are the same as for the regular UI program. Your employer should have reported your wages to the state. If the wages were not reported, the state may request you provide your W-2 and they will conduct a wage audit. See the response to [Q1](#) for general eligibility information.

F. I FILED MY CLAIM: WHAT COMES NEXT?

It is important that you provide accurate information, to the best of your ability, as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back the benefits you received. The most important thing is to be honest. If you intentionally make false statements or hide information to gain or maintain UI benefits, you are committing fraud. If you are confused about what you are supposed to do or report, contact the state UI agency for clarification.

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Q21: I was a federal employee, and I submitted my claim to the state UI agency, but I received a Monetary Determination Notice showing I do not have any wages and am my weekly benefit amount is zero. What does that mean?

A21: For former federal employees, it is normal for the UI claim to first appear ineligible (*e.g.*, receive a Monetary Determination Notice that shows a \$0 weekly benefit amount or doesn't include any information about your federal employer) when you file. federal employers do not report wage information to state UI agencies each quarter, as most other employers do.

Once you file your claim, the state UI agency will request wage and separation information from your federal employer to complete your claim. Upon receiving this information, the state UI agency will add the reported wages into the base period of your claim, as appropriate, and issue a revised Monetary Determination Notice. This is a manual process and requires more time than a regular state claim.

See the response to [Q14](#) regarding concerns about obtaining information from your federal employer. Given the volume of UI claims being processed, states may require longer than normal processing times. During this time, be sure to continue filing your weekly certifications (see response to [Q26](#)).

Once appropriate documentation is processed, the state will issue an updated Monetary Determination Notice that will include your federal wages and it will advise you of your weekly benefit amount and maximum benefit amount. Read all documents carefully to understand your rights and responsibilities.

Q22: I received my updated Monetary Determination Notice and am eligible for benefits. What happens next?

A22: It generally takes 3-6 weeks after you file your claim to receive your first benefit payment as long as there are no other eligibility issues. If there are other eligibility issue(s) on your claim, the state UI agency may need to conduct further review. For example, if you were terminated from employment, the state UI agency will attempt to gather information from you, your former employer, and any other interested parties. Once this review is complete, the state UI agency will either pay benefits for any eligible weeks filed or will send you a Notice of Determination that explains why you are not eligible and provides you with information on how to appeal the decision.

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Generally, state UI agencies have 21 days to resolve any issues preventing payment, but the volume of UI claims can impact this timeline. It is important to respond to any information requests from the state UI agency as soon as possible.

In addition, states require you to file weekly or biweekly claims (certification) to receive payment. These certifications continue throughout the life of your claim, even if you are not being paid while waiting on a nonmonetary determination or an appeal. Failure to complete the certifications can delay or prevent payment, and may result in additional eligibility issues, so it is very important to certify timely (see the response to [Q26](#)).

Q23: My claim was denied. Can I appeal?

A23: State UI agencies must offer you an opportunity for a fair hearing in the event a claim is denied. Your Notice of Determination will contain instructions on how to submit an appeal and will provide the deadline to appeal. It is important to continue to complete your weekly certifications (see the response to [Q26](#)) during any appeal period if you are still unemployed. If a decision is made in your favor, you will be paid retroactively if no other denials exist on your claim.

Q24: What do I do when I find a job?

A24: It is important to report any work performed and any wages earned when submitting your weekly or biweekly claim certifications. You must report that you started working, even if you have not yet received a paycheck. State law will determine to what extent your earnings from employment will impact your weekly benefits. The state agency will advise you on how to accurately report earnings and your return to work.

It is important that you provide accurate earnings information to the best of your ability as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back the benefits you received. The most important thing is to be honest. If you intentionally make false statements or hide information to gain or maintain UI benefits, you are committing fraud. If you are confused about what you are supposed to do or report, contact the state UI agency for clarification.

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Q25: I received a payout for vacation pay from my federal employer when I separated. Am I still eligible for UI benefits?

A25: State law determines whether and to what extent vacation pay may disqualify you from receiving UI benefits for certain weeks. Some states prorate your vacation pay to specific weeks and, generally, deductible income reduces an individual's weekly benefit amount. If the amount of vacation pay you received exceeds the amount of your weekly benefit amount, you will not qualify for payment for that week.

If you are denied benefits for a period of time because you received vacation pay from your federal employer, you may be eligible after the period for which the vacation payments are allocated. Consult the appropriate state statute, regulation, or policy for more specific information regarding the state's vacation pay provisions. For additional information on how each state addresses vacation pay, see **Table 5-20** at:

<https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/pdf/uilawcompar/2023/nonmonetary.pdf>

Q26: What other eligibility requirements must I meet to remain eligible for UI benefits each week?

A26: State UI agencies require that you submit weekly or biweekly claims (certification) to receive payment. These certifications continue throughout the life of your claim, even if you are not being paid while waiting on a nonmonetary determination or an appeal. Failure to complete the certifications can delay or prevent payment, and may result in additional eligibility issues, so it is very important to certify timely. The state UI agency will provide instructions on how to submit your certifications.

It is through the certification process that states assess whether you meet the criteria to receive payment. Some of these criteria include:

- You must be able to work, actively looking for work and available to accept work, if offered, for each week you expect to be paid UI benefits. The state agency will instruct you on how and when to report your work search activities and register with the state's employment service office, if required. Failing to meet the state's requirement for work search each week could result in a denial of benefits for the week.
- You must report any work performed during the week for which you are filing, even if you have not yet been paid. State law determines to what

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extent your weekly benefits are reduced due to earnings. Intentionally misrepresenting or failing to report earnings is fraud. This will result in penalties in addition to the requirement to repay any UI benefits you received.

- You may be required to report other types of payments you received for the week(s) such as: severance, vacation, holiday, pensions, disability, etc. State UI law will determine the types of payments that must be reported and the extent to which these types of payments would reduce your weekly benefit, if at all.
- You may also be asked to report if you have refused an offer of work or are attending school.

Q27: What resources are available to me to help me find work?

A27: You can learn about a variety of programs that help individuals find employment, including résumé writing, job search workshops, career coaching, and apprenticeship programs, through American Job Centers located across the country. These services are available at no cost to you. Your state UI agency will have additional resources to assist you in finding new employment. To find more information about the American Job Center nearest you, please visit <https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/AmericanJobCenters/american-job-centers.aspx>.

Q28: Are UI benefits taxable?

A28: Yes. UI benefits are considered taxable income. You will have the opportunity to elect to withhold income taxes from your weekly benefits when you file your claim. Consult a tax professional for specifics on your tax liability.

G. LAPSE IN APPROPRIATIONS: ELIGIBILITY FOR UI BENEFITS

Information in the Event of a Full or Partial Lapse in Appropriations: Section 4 in UIPL No. [03-22](#) includes information regarding eligibility for excepted, exempt, and furloughed employees.

It is important that you provide accurate information, to the best of your ability, as inaccurate information could result in an overpayment, which requires you to pay back the benefits you received. The most important thing is to be honest. If you intentionally

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make false statements or hide information to gain or maintain UI benefits, you are committing fraud. If you are confused about what you are supposed to do or report, contact the state UI agency for clarification.

Q29: I have been furloughed during the lapse in appropriations. Am I eligible for UI benefits?

A29: *Furloughed employees* are individuals who are not working or receiving pay during a lapse in appropriations. See the response to [Q1](#).

Additionally, if you later receive back pay or retroactive pay for the time during which you were furloughed, reference [Q34](#).

Q30: I am an excepted employee during the lapse in appropriations. Am I eligible for UI benefits?

A30: *Excepted employees* are individuals who are not furloughed because they are performing excepted functions, and are required to continue working, either on a full-time or intermittent basis. Excepted employees are not paid during the shutdown for their work due to the lapse in appropriations but are entitled to pay for the hours worked during the lapse. Intermittent workers, who work only as necessary to perform excepted functions, will have a varied schedule that may include some periods of full-time work, some periods of part-time work, and some periods of no work at all (*i.e.*, furlough status).

Excepted workers working full-time are not considered unemployed and would not be eligible for UI benefits.

In contrast, intermittent workers may be eligible for benefits for weeks in which they do not work full-time. Reference [Q26](#) for additional information on eligibility for UI benefits each week, including the requirement to report any hours worked even though you have not yet received payment. Reference [Q32](#) regarding the requirement to look for work while receiving UI benefits during a furlough.

Additionally, if you later receive back pay or retroactive pay for the time during which you were furloughed, reference [Q34](#).

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Q31: I am an exempt employee during the lapse in appropriations. Am I eligible for UI benefits?

A31: *Exempt employees* are individuals who are not furloughed because their positions are either funded by sources other than the lapsed appropriation or are not subject to furlough (e.g., Presidential Appointees who are not covered by the leave system in 5 U.S.C. chapter 63, or an equivalent formal leave system.). Exempt workers working full-time are not considered unemployed and would not be eligible for UI benefits.

Q32: I am a furloughed employee during a lapse in appropriations. If I file for UI benefits, do I need to look for work?

A32: Federal law requires that an individual is “actively seeking work” while receiving UI benefits. However, many state laws provide for a waiver or deferral of the work search requirements when an individual remains work-attached and is temporarily furloughed. The state UI agency will provide instructions for your situation when you file a UI claim.

Reference Question C.3. under OPM’s [Guidance for Shutdown Furloughs](#) (September 28, 2025) about taking another job while on furlough.

Q33: I am a furloughed employee during a lapse in appropriations and am receiving UI benefits. My local government is also providing support payments to federal employees who are not being paid during the lapse in appropriations. Would these support payments impact my eligibility for UI benefits?

A33: Each state sets its own guidelines for eligibility of UI benefits, including whether the individual received any “deductible income” that may cause a reduction in benefits payable. State law will determine whether any support payments are reportable as deductible income.

The most important thing is to be honest. If you intentionally make false statements or hide information to gain or maintain UI benefits, you are committing fraud. If you are confused about what you are supposed to do or report, contact the state UI agency for clarification.

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Q34: I was furloughed during the lapse in appropriations and now expect to receive back pay. What should I do about my UI claim?

A34: If you receive back pay or retroactive pay that covers the same time for which you received UI benefits, it is important that you promptly report this information to the state UI agency in accordance with their instructions. The state UI agency may contact you for additional information and establish an overpayment of any UI benefits received. Please ensure your contact information is correct and kept up to date.

If an overpayment is established, you will receive a determination advising that you must repay this overpayment. After providing you with the opportunity to appeal and to voluntarily repay the overpaid amount, if state law requires employers to recover overpayments, the state may require that your federal agency garnish wages to recoup any overpayments.

Q35: I am an excepted employee during a lapse in appropriations and am receiving UI benefits for the weeks in which I am not working full-time. If I am activated to work a few hours during the week (but less than full-time), how will this impact my eligibility for UI benefits?

A35: If you are working while claiming UI benefits, you must report how much money you made. Earnings must be reported each week when certifying for UI benefits for the previous reporting period (generally, Sunday through Saturday), even though you have not yet been paid. The amount you must report is your gross earnings, not your net earnings. For instance, if you worked 10 hours in a week at \$20 per hour, you would report \$200 in gross earnings for the week.

Generally, states reduce an individual's weekly benefit amount based upon the part-time earnings reported by the individual on their claim for benefits. The amount of that reduction depends on state law. All states disregard some earnings for partially unemployed individuals, referred to as the "earnings disregard". Thus, a partially unemployed individual's weekly benefit will usually be the difference between their weekly earnings, reduced by the state's earnings disregard, and their weekly benefit amount.

For a quick snapshot of how each state computes its earnings disregard, please reference the most recent **Significant Provisions of State Unemployment Insurance Laws** at <https://oui.doleta.gov/unemploy/content/sigpros/2020-2029/January2025.pdf>.

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H. Flowchart: Process for Federal Employees to File for UI Benefits

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