

Maryland Unemployment Insurance

What You Should Know



Unemployment Insurance Facts



Unemployment Insurance (UI) began nationwide in the United States on August 14, 1935, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act.

- In Maryland, the UI program is administered by the Maryland Department of Labor.
- Employers pay into the Maryland Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, which is used solely to pay benefits to the unemployed.

The UI program aims to:

- pay temporary benefits to displaced employees who are unemployed through no fault of their own and are seeking work, and
- help workers find suitable jobs through American Job Centers and other Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners.

BEACON

Modernized UI System

BEACON, the Maryland Division of Unemployment Insurance (Division) online UI system, integrates benefits, appeals, and contributions functionalities.

- Claimants, employers, and third-party agents can log into their BEACON portals to perform several UI tasks online, 24/7.

BEACON Claimant Portal: beacon.labor.maryland.gov/

BEACON Employer Portal: employer.beacon.labor.md.gov/

BEACON Third-Party Agent Portal: agent.beacon.labor.md.gov/

- Additional information about BEACON is available online:

- Claimant Tutorial Videos:
labor.maryland.gov/employment/uibeaconvideo.shtml
- Employer and Third-Party Agent Tutorial Videos:
labor.maryland.gov/employment/uitaxapps.shtml#empvideos
- BEACON System section of the Division homepage:
MDunemployment.com

UI Information for Employers



Employer UI Obligations

Covered employment: An individual must have earned sufficient wages in covered employment during the base period (see slide 10 for more about the base period) to be eligible for UI benefits. When an individual performs work for an employer in return for wages, the individual is likely covered for UI purposes.

For covered employment exemptions, see the **Employers' UI Contributions Information and Definitions webpage** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/empfaq.shtml).

Contributory employer: A contributory employer pays quarterly UI taxes based on the employer's benefit charges and the taxable wages the employer reported to the Division.

To learn more, see **Unemployment Insurance Tax Rates** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/uitrustfundpoints.shtml).

Reimbursable employer: Certain not-for-profit organizations and government entities may choose to reimburse the state dollar for dollar for benefits charged against their accounts.

For more information, see **Employers' UI Contributions Information and Definitions** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/empfaq.shtml).

Note: It is illegal for an employer to require an employee to repay, pay into, or waive any UI benefit rights.

Employer Requirements

- **UI Account Registration** - Employers are required to register for a Maryland UI account:
 - in BEACON (employer.beacon.labor.md.gov); or,
 - by filing a Combined Registration Application (interactive.marylandtaxes.gov/webapps/comptrollercra/).

To learn more, see labor.maryland.gov/employment/empfaq.shtml.

- **Quarterly Reports and UI Taxes** - Each quarter, employers are required to:
 - report the total gross wages paid on the Quarterly Contribution Report; and,
 - contributory employers must pay UI taxes and reimbursable employers must reimburse the Division for benefits paid.

For details, see the **Employers' Quick Reference Guide** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/empguide/empguide.pdf).

- **Mass Layoff** - Employers experiencing a mass layoff (affecting 25+ workers) are required to submit a list of impacted workers to the Division at least 48 hours in advance. **Employers can report a mass layoff in [BEACON](#).**

Employers covered by the WARN Act must provide at least 60 days' advance notice of any mass layoff or plant closure (dol.gov/general/topic/termination/plantclosings).

Report a dislocation event at labor.maryland.gov/employment/disworkerreport.shtml or call the **Maryland Dislocation Services Unit at 410-767-2833**.

Employer Requirements

- **Request for Separation Information** - When a former employee files a claim for UI, the Division will request separation information from the employer. Employers can respond to the Request for Separation Information form in:
 - [BEACON](#);
 - **State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES)**; (labor.maryland.gov/employment/uicides.shtml); or via,
 - Mail (to the address appearing on the form).
 - **Eligibility Issues** - An employer should be available to provide the Division with information about eligibility issues resulting from claims filed by former employees.
 - **Required Posters** - Employers must display two posters (about UI benefits and health insurance coverage) in a highly visible area of the workplace. Posters are provided when the UI account is established and are available online at labor.maryland.gov/oeope/poster.shtml.
 - **Report Hires/Job Refusals** - Employers are required to report new hires and rehires in the **Maryland New Hire Registry** (mdnewhire.com/#/public/public-landing/login).
- Employers should also inform the Division in [BEACON](#) when a claimant refuses an offer of suitable work or a former employee refuses to return to work.

Work Sharing Layoff Aversion Program

Work Sharing (also called Short-Time Compensation) allows employers faced with a short-term decline in business to temporarily reduce employees' hours, as opposed to laying off staff. The impacted employees receive partial UI benefits.

Some employer requirements include:

- Must have at least two employees per affected unit;
- Must reduce a participating employee's hours by **at least 10%**, and **no more than 60%**;
- Must be current with UI tax contributions.

Benefits for employers include:

- Retaining experienced employees, keeping employee morale high, and maintaining productivity; and,
- Maintaining stable staffing levels to allow business to return to normal operations when economic conditions improve. Saving the expense and time of recruiting, hiring, and training new employees.

To learn more, visit labor.maryland.gov/employment/worksharing/.

Only employers can establish a Work Sharing plan. To apply:

- complete the Work Sharing application (labor.maryland.gov/forms/uiwsapplication.pdf) and participant list (labor.maryland.gov/forms/uiwsparticipantlist.xlsx); and,
- Submit both documents to ui.worksharing@maryland.gov 7-15 calendar days before your anticipated Work Sharing start date.

UI Information for Claimants



Eligibility for UI Benefits

To qualify for UI, an individual must:

- be unemployed through no fault of their own,
- be monetarily eligible,
 - To be monetarily eligible, an individual must have worked and earned sufficient wages in either the:
 - a. **Standard Base Period** (first four of the last five completed calendar quarters before the claim effective date), or
 - The claim effective date is the Sunday of the week in which the initial claim is filed. For example, if a claim is filed on Wednesday, March 4, the claim effective date is Sunday, March 1.
 - b. **Alternate Base Period** (four most recently completed calendar quarters of wages earned before the claim effective date).
- be able to work and available for work without restrictions.

See the **Eligibility Requirements FAQs** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/claimfaq.shtml) to learn more.

Applying for UI Benefits

To begin the UI process, individuals should apply for UI benefits (also called filing an initial claim). **File an initial claim** either:

- Online in **BEACON**:
(beacon.labor.maryland.gov/beacon/claimant-page.html), or
- By calling a claims agent: **(667) 207-6520**
Note: Claimants **cannot** file an initial claim in person.

After a claimant applies, the Maryland Division of Unemployment Insurance (the Division) will send a **Statement of Wages and Monetary Determination** to inform the claimant whether or not they are eligible for UI benefits.

For more information about filing an initial claim, see:

- **Claims Filing - Initial Claims FAQs**
(labor.maryland.gov/employment/claimfaq.shtml)
- **BEACON Account Registration tutorial video**
(labor.maryland.gov/employment/uibeaconvideo.shtml)
- **List of Information and Documents Needed for Claims Filing**
(labor.maryland.gov/employment/uicclaimdocs.pdf)

Claimant Requirements

To remain eligible for UI benefits, a claimant must:

1. **Be able and available for work without restrictions.**
2. **Actively search for work each week.**
See **slide 14** for details.
3. **File timely weekly claim certifications to request UI benefit payments.**
4. **Report all payments received on the weekly claim certifications.**
See **slide 13** for details.
5. **Be available and/or contact the Division and/or the Maryland Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) when instructed.**
6. **Accept all offers of suitable work.**

For more information about claimant requirements, see the **Eligibility Requirements FAQs:** labor.maryland.gov/employment/claimfaq.shtml.

Claimant Requirements

Reporting Earnings and Payments

You must report all payments that you received or expect to receive, (vacation, holiday, bonus, or special payments, severance, pensions, back pay/damages and etc.) when you file an initial claim. If you learn of these payments after filing an initial claim, you must report it by calling a claims agent (except for pension payments. See the section below for details).

See **Claims Filing - Initial Claims FAQs** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/claimfaq.shtml) to learn more.

When you file your weekly claim certification, you must report:

- your gross earnings for any work you performed (paid training, part-time, temporary, self-employment, odd jobs, tips, etc.); and,
- the first payment from a pension you did not previously report or changes to your pension amount. To learn more, see the **Claims Filing - Weekly Claim Certifications FAQs** labor.maryland.gov/employment/claimfaq.shtml.

Wages (including tips) must be reported in the week that the money is earned, not the week it was actually paid. **Commission payments are reported in the week that they are paid to you.**

If you earn **more than your weekly benefit amount (WBA)** in part-time work during a given week, you are not considered unemployed, and your claim will be closed. If you: become unemployed again or you earn less than your WBA; and you have benefits remaining on your claim; you may **reopen your claim** (by selecting the Reopen Claim action item in BEACON or calling a claims agent).

Claimant Work Search Requirements

To fulfill the work search requirements, a claimant must:

1. **Complete a one-time registration with the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE).** You may register at mwejobs.maryland.gov/ or at your local American Job Center (labor.maryland.gov/county/)

A claimant must also:

- upload or create a résumé in MWE;
- make the résumé viewable to employers in MWE; and,
- maintain an up-to-date résumé in MWE while collecting UI benefits.

2. **Complete at least three valid reemployment activities each week, which must include at least one job contact** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/uiaswreq.shtm).
3. Maintain a detailed record each week of your completed job contact(s) and reemployment activities. Submitting your contact(s) and activities in the Job Contact and Reemployment Activity Log, located in MWE, is the easiest way to do this.
 - **Important: Submitting your contact(s) and reemployment activities does not take the place of filing your weekly claim certification to request benefit payments.**

To learn more, see labor.maryland.gov/employment/uirex.shtml.

Claimant Benefit Payments

- The Division will calculate a weekly benefit amount (WBA) for each eligible claimant.
- The WBA is the amount of benefit payments a claimant may be entitled to each week. The WBA is based on the wages the claimant earned during the base period.
- A claimant may receive more or less than the WBA during a benefit week, depending on certain factors. For example, if a claimant performed any work while collecting UI benefits, the claimant may receive less than the WBA in a benefit week.
- Eligible claimants may receive a **dependent's allowance of \$8 per child**, not to exceed five dependent children. Even if a claimant receives dependents' allowance, the claimant's WBA will not exceed the maximum of \$430.
- The **WBA in Maryland** ranges from **\$50 (minimum)** to **\$430 (maximum)**. A claimant will choose whether to receive these payments by direct deposit or check when the claimant files an initial claim.
- Claimants may receive **up to 26 weeks** of Regular UI benefits.
- UI benefits are subject to federal and state taxes. A claimant may choose to have **federal tax (10%)**, **Maryland state tax (7%)**, both, or no taxes withheld from the claimant's UI benefits.

UI Information for Claimants and Employers



Appeals

Claimants - If a claimant receives a determination disqualifying the claimant from receiving benefits, the claimant may file an appeal. The determination will include information about filing an appeal, including the deadline for filing.

Employers - Employers can appeal a liability determination, a benefit charge, or a tax rate assignment within 15 days of the decision. If the decision is appealable, employers will receive information that includes instructions for filing an appeal.

Third-party agents may also file appeals on behalf of their clients.

File an Appeal - Claimants, employers, and agents may file an appeal in BEACON. Those who do not have BEACON access can email UILowerAppeals.Labor@maryland.gov for filing instructions.

Appeal Hearings - Those notified about a scheduled appeal should make every effort to be available. Appeal hearings are the last step at which either a claimant or employer has the right to present evidence.

Appeal Process - The Lower Appeals Division will hear any initial determination appeals. If an individual disagrees with a decision from the Lower Appeals Division, the individual may file an appeal with the Board of Appeals.

For more information, see the **Lower Appeals** (labor.maryland.gov/uiappeals/aplower.shtml) or the **Board of Appeals** web pages (labor.maryland.gov/uiappeals/apboard.shtml).

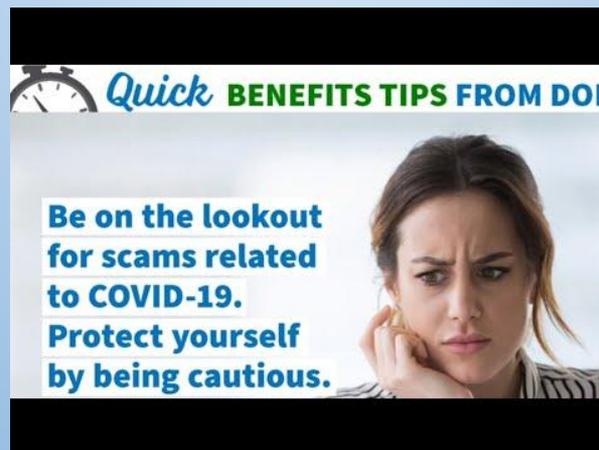
Fraud Information

It is considered UI fraud if an individual knowingly makes false statements, misrepresents, or fails to give important facts to obtain or increase UI benefits. A claimant who makes an innocent mistake when filing an initial claim or claim certification should immediately call a claims agent at **667-207-6520**.

To report suspected UI fraud, complete the **Request for Investigation of Unemployment Insurance Fraud** form (labor.maryland.gov/forms/uifraudtipform.pdf) and return via:

- E-mail: ui.fraud@maryland.gov;
- Fax: **410-767-2610**; or,
- Mail: **Benefit Payment Control, 1100 N. Eutaw Street, Room 206, Baltimore, MD 21201**

To learn more, see the **Overpayments and Fraud FAQs** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/uibpcfafs.shtml).



Video Courtesy of [DOL](https://www.dol.gov)

Fraud Penalties

If the Division determines that a **claimant committed UI fraud**, the claimant:

- will be disqualified from receiving UI benefits for one year; and,
- must repay all benefits acquired by fraud, plus a 15 percent penalty and a monthly 1.5 percent monthly interest payment.

In addition, the claimant may be subject to:

- a \$1,000 fine; and/or,
- imprisonment.

To learn more, see:

- **Overpayments and Fraud FAQs** at: labor.maryland.gov/employment/uibpcfags.shtml



Claimant and Employer Resources

Claims Agent: 667-207-6520. File a new claim or inquire about an existing claim. For hours, see labor.maryland.gov/employment/officenum.shtml.

Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phone system: File claim certification, reset PIN, or check payment status, 24/7.

- Baltimore area or out of state: **410-949-0022**
- MD, outside of Baltimore area: **800-827-4839**

Employer Call Center: 410-949-0033. Inquire about UI taxes, benefit charges, etc. For hours, see labor.maryland.gov/employment/contributions.shtml.

Communication Assistance: If you have a disability which makes it difficult for you to communicate by phone, see the **Special Accommodation Information and Resources webpage** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/uiaccessibility.shtml).

Virtual Assistant: Chat with a claims agent or get automated answers to questions. Automated answers available 24/7, live chat available during agent hours. Select the “**Chat with Us**” button on the **Division homepage** (mdunemployment.com) to get started.

For more information about UI, see:

- **Unemployment Insurance in Maryland A Guide to Reemployment (Claimant Guide)** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/clmtguide/uiclmtmpamphlet.pdf)
- **Employers' Quick Reference Guide** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/empguide/empguide.pdf)

Thank You!

