

# Filing for Unemployment in Ohio: Quick Tips and Step-By-Step Guide

## When to Apply

Apply for unemployment benefits as soon as you become unemployed. Your claim will become effective the Sunday after your application is filed. Your first payment will begin processing after you (1) receive your eligibility determination AND (2) file your first weekly claim. Applying online will help expedite this process. If you are eligible, you will receive payments retroactive to the date you became eligible.

## How to Qualify

If applying before April 5, 2020, you must have been employed for at least 20 weeks between October 1, 2018 and September 30, 2019. After April 5, 2020, the qualifying period begins January 1, 2019, and ends December 31, 2019. Additionally, you must have earned an average weekly wage (before taxes or other deductions) of at least \$269 during your 20 weeks of employment.

## Apply Online

Applying online is the quickest way to start receiving unemployment benefits. To apply online, go to [unemployment.ohio.gov](http://unemployment.ohio.gov) and follow the steps listed in the “Step-By-Step Guide” section below. If you don’t have access to a computer, you can apply by phone by calling 877-644-6562. Call center hours have been extended to Monday through Friday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturdays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Sundays 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. for both applications and PIN resets. For help with other issues, please call during normal weekday business hours. Note that it is not possible to apply for unemployment benefits in person.

If you are unemployed because of the pandemic, **please enter mass-layoff number 2000180**, and answer “No” to the question, “Have you worked for any other employers in the last 6 weeks besides the one who provided you with this “ID number?”

## What Information is Needed

Be prepared to provide the following information when you file a new application:

- Your Social Security number and driver’s license (or state ID) number.
- The Social Security numbers and dates of birth of any dependents, to include children and your spouse.
- The name, address, telephone number and dates of employment for your most recent employer.
- Bank routing and account number or debit card number for payment.
- Alien Registration Number and expiration date of your work authorization.
- If you had out-of-state employment, have worked for the federal government, or are separated from military service, more information is required, including:
  - Form DD-214, member 4 copy (for military service)
  - SF-8 or SF-50 form (for federal government employment)

## Step-by-Step Guide to Applying Online

1. Gather your personal information as detailed in the Quick Tips section above.
2. Go to [unemployment.ohio.gov](https://unemployment.ohio.gov).
3. Click “Apply for Unemployment Now” in the center of the page.
4. Read the “Release of Information” message that appears and click “I agree.”
5. Under “Claimant Login,” use either your existing login information or create an account.  
*NOTE: If you already have an account and do not remember your PIN, call 1-866-962-4064 for an automated attendant to help you reset your PIN.*
6. If creating a new account, fill out the claimant registration boxes, steps one and two. Write down the temporary PIN number you’ll be given.
7. Click on “Login Screen” and follow the directions, using your Social Security number as your username and entering your temporary PIN. Click “Login.”
8. Create a new PIN and write it down. Confirm your new PIN and click “Submit.”
9. Click “File a New Claim for Unemployment Benefits.” It will take you to a personal information page. Fill in your information, and click “Next.”  
*NOTE: When asked how you would like to receive correspondence, we encourage you to select “Email.” Email ensures timely customer service, real-time PIN reset assistance and will expedite your benefit application.*
10. Fill out the requested demographic information and click “Next.”
11. You will be asked eligibility questions that you will need to complete. Use the help features and videos to answer any questions you may have about filling out the information. Note that you will need to answer “Yes” to the question about withholding 10% of your payments for federal tax purposes. If you choose to claim a dependent, you will be taken to a page where you can do that. Click “Next.”
12. You will be asked additional eligibility questions, including details about any pension or severance payments you are receiving, out-of-state employment, school enrollment and whether you are a member of a trade union. Click “Next.”
13. If you have lost your job as a direct or indirect result of the coronavirus, select “Yes” and enter the Mass-Layoff/Buyout Identification Number, **2000180**. Then select “No” on the next question. This will expedite your benefit application and will not affect your eligibility. If you have already submitted your application without this number, you do not need to add it.
14. The next page registers you for job matching. You will be asked to choose two occupations in which you’d like to work. Click “Occupation Lookup” to search for your desired occupation by Title or Description. Once you find your first preference, click the circle to the left of the occupation and click “Occupation1” at the bottom of the page. Search for your second preference. Once you find it, click the circle to the left of the occupation and click “Occupation2” at the bottom of the page. Finally, click “OK” at the bottom of the page. Complete the remaining fields on the page and click “Next.”
15. The next page explains two “Getting Paid” options. You have the choice of either a debit card or direct deposit to a bank account. No matter what your choice is, click “Next.”
16. Enter the information needed to be paid either through the debit card or bank account options and click “Next.”
17. The last page will ask you to certify that all the information you entered is accurate. If it is, click “Agree” to submit.

## What Next?

- After filing, you will receive further information by mail or email. An email will be sent from [OJI@odjfs.state.oh.us](mailto:OJI@odjfs.state.oh.us).
- Your claim will be assigned to a Processing Center, based on the last four digits of your Social Security number. [Click here for a list of Processing Centers by Social Security number](#).
- While you're waiting for your eligibility determination, be sure to file your first weekly claim to expedite payment. **In order to be paid, you must file weekly claims** for each week that you are unemployed or make less than your weekly benefit amount.
  - Log in to your account at [unemployment.ohio.gov](http://unemployment.ohio.gov) to file weekly claims.
  - For a step-by-step guide to filing your weekly claims online, click [here](#).
  - If you are prompted to enter work-search activities, enter "COVID-19," as you are not required to actively seek employment during the pandemic.
  - If you receive a message that you are unable to file a weekly claim until Sunday, that is because you cannot claim a week of benefits until the week has ended on Saturday at midnight.
- You may receive automated notices that you are required to search for work or conduct work-search activities. Please ignore these.
- If you receive automated notices about any of the following, please IGNORE them:
  - Work search
  - Training
  - School employment
  - RESEA/UCRS programs
  - Union verification
  - OhioMeansJobs