



Ohio Unemployment Program Policy Valid Applications

Effective Date: 6/16/2026

Purpose

This policy outlines the requirements for establishing a valid application for unemployment benefits in Ohio. It ensures that applicants, employers, and agency staff understand the criteria necessary to begin a benefit year. This protects program integrity, ensures proper payment of benefits, and prevents incorrect charges to employers.

References

Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 4141.28(B) – Application for Determination of Benefit Rights

[Section 4141.28 - Ohio Revised Code | Ohio Laws](#)

ORC 4141.01(M), (N), and (R) – Definitions of unemployment, partial unemployment, and benefit year

[Section 4141.01 - Ohio Revised Code | Ohio Laws](#)

Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 4141-27-05 – Time Limitations for Filing Claims

[Rule 4141-27-05 - Ohio Administrative Code | Ohio Laws](#)

Legal Requirements

To establish a valid application for unemployment benefits in Ohio, the following requirements must be met:

- A prior benefit year must have expired before a new benefit year is established. (This is sometimes called the 52-week requirement.)
- The individual must be unemployed as defined in ORC 4141.01(M) or partially unemployed as defined in ORC 4141.01(N).
- The individual must have worked at least 20 qualifying weeks in covered employment within the regular or alternate base period of the claim.
- The individual must have earned an average weekly wage of at least 27.5% of the statewide average weekly wage.
- The separating employment must be under non-disqualifying conditions.
- The individual must provide a valid Social Security number and any required identity documentation.

Definitions

- **Alternate Base Period:** The last four completed calendar quarters before an individual applies for unemployment benefits. This is used to determine eligibility only if the person doesn't qualify using the regular base period.

- **Base Period:** The first four of the last five completed calendar quarters before an individual applies for unemployment benefits. *(For example, if they applied on January 1, 2026, the base period would be October 2024 - September 2025.)*
- **Benefit Year:** A 52-week period beginning with the week in which a claimant first files a valid application (ORC 4141.01(R)).
- **Intervening Employment:** Other employment required between successive benefit years, including at least six weeks of work and earnings totaling at least three times the prior benefit year's average weekly wage.
- **Partially Unemployed:** An individual is partially unemployed if, due to an involuntary reduction in work, they earn less in a week than their weekly benefit amount (ORC 4141.01(N)).
- **Totally Unemployed:** An individual is totally unemployed when they perform no services and receive no pay for a given week (ORC 4141.01(M)).
- **Valid Application:** An application that meets all state-mandated requirements.

Policy Statement

The following explains how agency staff apply statutory requirements to determine whether an application is valid.

Benefit Year Expiration and Intervening Employment (6×3 Rule)

- If a claimant previously established a benefit year, a new benefit year may not begin until the prior 52-week benefit year has fully expired.
- If required, intervening employment must include:
 - At least six (6) weeks of covered employment
 - Earnings of at least three (3) times the claimant's prior average weekly wage
 Only wages from actual work performed may be used to meet this requirement

Timing of Application Relative to Unemployment

- Applications must be filed during a week in which the claimant is totally or partially unemployed.
- They must be disallowed if filed before total or partial unemployment begins.

Weeks of Employment (20-Week Requirement)

- To determine whether a claimant worked at least 20 qualifying weeks in covered employment within the regular or alternate base period of the claim, agency staff must:
 - Determine qualifying weeks based on Ohio's definition of covered employment
 - Review earnings and employment records to confirm that at least 20 qualifying weeks occurred within the regular or alternate base period
 - Resolve discrepancies by requesting employment documentation when necessary

Wage Requirement (27.5 Threshold)

- When applying the statutory wage requirement, agency staff must:

- Use the annually published statewide average weekly wage to determine the minimum qualifying wage
- Evaluate wages reported in the regular or alternate base period to confirm that the claimant's average weekly wage met or exceeded the required 27.5% threshold
- Request additional wage documentation if employer-reported information appears incomplete or inconsistent

Separation and Employer/Employee Relationship

- Applications may be considered valid when:
 - The employer/employee relationship ended during the filing week.
 - and**
 - The reasons for the work separation are non-disqualifying under Ohio law—even if the claimant's earnings that week exceeded the weekly benefit amount.
- In all quit and discharge cases, the employer/employee relationship is considered terminated for eligibility purposes.

Identity Verification

- When they apply for benefits, claimants must provide acceptable proof of their identity, including a valid Social Security number.

Incomplete, premature, or otherwise invalid applications must be disallowed.

Required Disclosures

ORC 4141.28(B) requires claimants to disclose any child support obligations.

Employer Information Requirement

Employers must respond to agency requests for separation information within 10 working days.

Review and Updates

This policy will be subject to periodic review to ensure alignment with state and federal updates and organizational requirements. Any necessary amendments will be communicated accordingly.

Change Log

Published Date	Status (Baseline, Revision, Deletion)	Document Version	Page(s) Affected	Description of Revision	Author
6/17/2026	Baseline	Vs.1	NA	Draft	ABW

Questions?

If you have questions, please call 1-877-644-6562 or visit the “Contact Us” page at unemployment.ohio.gov and complete either the “Employer Inquiry Form” or the “Claimant Unemployment Program Inquiry Form.”