Filing for Unemployment Benefits 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

To be eligible for traditional unemployment benefits in Ohio, you must be totally or partially unemployed through no fault of your own. In addition, you must have worked at least 20 weeks in covered employment and earned at least $280 a week in the base period of your claim (four out of the last five completed calendar quarters). If you had a prior unemployment claim that is expired, you must have worked in covered employment since the beginning of the prior claim year to reestablish yourself as a worker.

Apply Online

Applying online is the quickest way to start receiving unemployment benefits. To apply online, go to unemployment.ohio.gov and follow the steps listed below. If you don't have access to a computer, you can apply by calling 1-877-644-6562. Call center hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. Note that it is not possible to apply for unemployment benefits in person.

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, including children and your spouse.

- The name, address, telephone number, and dates of employment for your most recent employer and any other employers from the last 6 weeks.

- 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)

Additional Items Needed to Verify Your Identity

In addition, you will need to provide documents to verify your identity. Here are some examples:

- Photo Identification – Acceptable forms of photo ID include a copy of your passport, driver's license, state identification card, military identification, permanent resident card, or student identification card.

- Full Legal Name – Acceptable documents to prove your full legal name include a copy of your valid driver's license, military identification, birth certificate, certificate of naturalization, certificate of citizenship, U.S. passport, foreign passport with visa, or other official document. If your full legal name is different from the one that appears on your documents, you must provide additional documents – for example, a marriage certificate, court order name change, or decree of divorce, disillusionment, or annulment.

- Date of Birth – Acceptable documents to prove your date of birth include a copy of your valid driver's license, military identification, birth certificate, certificate of naturalization, certificate of citizenship, U.S. passport, foreign passport with visa, or other official document.

- Legal Presence in the U.S. – Acceptable documents to prove your legal presence in the U.S. include a copy of your birth certificate, U.S. passport, certificate of naturalization, certificate of citizenship, or other official document.

- Social Security Number – Acceptable documents to prove your Social Security number include your Social Security card, W-2 (Wage and Tax Statement) from the last complete tax year, 1099 form, or pay stub.

- Street Address – Acceptable documents to prove your street address include a bank statement, pay stub, W-2 (Wage and Tax Statement) from the last complete tax year, or 1099 form. If you listed a post office box as your mailing address, you must submit proof of ownership, such as a copy of PS Form 1093.

- Bank Account – Acceptable documents to prove that your bank account is legitimate include a bank statement issued within the last 12 months or a copy of a voided check.

Step-by-Step Guide to Applying Online

1. Gather your personal information as detailed above.
2. Go to unemployment.ohio.gov.
3. Click "I am an Unemployed Worker" in the center of the page and then click "Apply for Unemployment Insurance."
4. Read the "Release of Information" message that appears and click "I agree."
5. Under "Claimant Login," click "Register."
6. Enter your Social Security number (SSN).
7. Enter your Social Security number again to confirm it and click "Register."
8. You will be redirected to the OH|ID log-in page. An OH|ID is an online user account that provides a secure, personalized experience for Ohioans to interact with multiple state agencies, programs, and services, all with a single username and password. For more information about OH|ID, click here.

If you already have an OH|ID:

a) Use your OH|ID credentials to log in to your OH|ID account.

b) Respond to the prompts to secure your account and verify your identity.

c) You will be returned to unemployment.ohio.gov.

If you have not yet created an OH|ID:

a) Enter the email address that you plan to use for your unemployment account. Then click "Verify."

b) You will receive an email containing your six-digit verification code from the following email address: [DONOTREPLY-EnterpriseIdentity@ohio.gov.](DONOTREPLY-EnterpriseIdentity@ohio.gov) (It may take several minutes for you to receive this email. If it seems to be taking a long time, please check your spam folder.)

c) Enter this six-digit verification code in the pop-up message on the registration page. Then click "Verify."

d) Complete the next five steps to create your Profile.

e) Click "Create Account."

f) You will receive a registration email when your new account is ready. Do not attempt to log in to your OH|ID until you receive this email.

g) Log in to your OH|ID account and respond to the prompts to secure your account and verify your identity.

h) You will be returned to unemployment.ohio.gov.

9. If you are creating a new unemployment account, please fill out the claimant registration boxes, labeled steps one and two.

   NOTE: If you already have an account but have not yet created an OH|ID and do not remember your PIN, enter your Social Security number. You will be prompted to call 1-866-962-4064 for an automated attendant to help you reset your PIN.

10. Click on "Login Screen" and follow the directions, using your Social Security number as your username. Enter your temporary PIN. Click "Login."

11. 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 and will expedite your benefit application.

12. Fill out the requested demographic information and click "Next."

13. 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 the question about whether you would like 10% of your payments to be withheld for federal tax purposes. Additionally, if you choose to claim a dependent, you will be taken to a page where you can do that. Click "Next."

14. You will be asked additional eligibility questions, including details about any pension or severance payments you may be receiving, out-of-state employment, school enrollment, and whether you are a member of a trade union. Answer them and click "Next."

15. If you were provided a Mass-Layoff/Buyout Identification Number, select "Yes" and enter the ID number.

16. 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."

17. 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."

18. Enter the information needed for you to be paid either through the debit card or bank account options and click "Next."

19. 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.

- 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 to file weekly claims.

- 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.

How-To Videos

For additional help navigating Ohio's unemployment system, please visit jfs.ohio.gov/ouio/HowToVideos.stm.