



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT *of*
ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Reemployment Assistance Resource Guide - COVID-19

Updated: April 23, 2020

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY 107 East Madison St. Tallahassee, FL

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Eligibility Requirements

- You must have lost your job through no fault of your own, so you must not have quit for personal reasons or been terminated for misconduct;
- You must be totally or partially unemployed;
- You must have a minimum amount of wages earned in what is called the "base period," which is the first 12 months of the past 15 months from when you filed your claim;
- At the time you apply, you must be able to work, available for work, and actively seeking work, unless otherwise exempt from this requirement. This includes being physically able to perform a job and having child care if necessary.

CARES Act Eligibility –

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act, signed into law on March 27, 2020, expands Reemployment Assistance benefits. Benefits will be paid from the date they became eligible under the CARES Act. At this time, individuals who apply for Reemployment Assistance whose employment was negatively impacted as a result of COVID-19 will follow the same application, review and payment process as all applicants for Reemployment Assistance in Florida.

Programs included in the CARES Act are:

- Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) - provides an additional \$600 per week to any individual eligible under Florida law for Reemployment Assistance. This benefit is available for weeks claimed March 29, 2020 – July 31, 2020 in addition to the funds owed under Florida law to individuals.
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) – provides **up to \$275** in weekly benefits to those not ordinarily eligible for Reemployment Assistance, in addition to the FPUC funding. This includes individuals who are self-employed or contract employees.
*Florida is currently working to distribute these funds to eligible individuals and will be providing more information.
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) - allows for an additional 13 weeks of benefits added to the end of state Reemployment Assistance benefits, in addition to the FPUC funding. This means claimants may collect unemployment benefits for a longer period of time than under normal circumstances. PEUC will provide individuals with **up to \$275** in weekly benefits.
*Florida is currently working to distribute these funds to eligible individuals and will be providing more information.
* This funding is subject to federal withholding taxes.

DEO will gather facts and determine whether you qualify. When the department receives information regarding your claim the following will happen:

- Your claim will be referred to a worker to determine eligibility.
- You may be contacted for additional information by telephone, email or mail.

A separate determination will be made for each issue and job separation that may affect your claim.

General Reemployment Assistance Questions

Q: What is Reemployment Assistance?

A: Unemployment Insurance was rebranded with the name Reemployment Assistance to reflect the comprehensive goal of assisting Floridians find work during periods of unemployment through monetary assistance when eligible and training through Florida's CareerSource centers.

Q: How do I know if I qualify for Reemployment benefits?

A: Please apply for Reemployment Assistance Benefits at FloridaJobs.org/COVID-19. When your application has been processed, we will notify you of your eligibility by providing a written determination electronically and/or by mail to explain your eligibility status.

- If you are eligible, you will receive payment for any weeks that you requested during the bi-weekly process. You are required to complete a few additional items after completing your application. To better serve you, Governor DeSantis has cut bureaucratic processes to ensure reemployment claims are processed and paid as quickly as possible.
- Request Benefit Payment
- In order to better serve you, Governor DeSantis suspended the bi-weekly reporting requirement. This means you do not have to log into CONNECT every two weeks to claim your weeks of reemployment assistance.
- O Governor DeSantis suspended the bi-weekly reporting requirement which means you will not be required to log into CONNECT every two weeks to claim your weeks of reemployment assistance. Please continue to check CONNECT for any important updates to your account.
- If you are not eligible, the written determination will explain the reason we denied your claim and will explain your appeal rights.
- If you disagree with a determination that denies benefits, you may request an appeal hearing.

When reviewing your claim, we will look to answer several questions that will impact your eligibility. Here are some examples:

- **Ability and Availability Issues:** In addition to reviewing why you lost your employment, we will look at whether you are able to work in another job. If you are not available to accept a job if one is offered, you will not qualify for benefits.
- **Discharge:** If you were fired from your job, we will look at the reasons why. Your employer must show that it had just cause to let you go, such as misconduct on the job or that you didn't try to do your duties successfully even though the employer tried to help you.
- **Voluntary Quit:** If you voluntarily quit your job, you must show that you quit your job for good cause.
- There are other factors that may impact your eligibility that we will ask you about. The most important thing for you to do is to answer all questions as accurately as possible. Always know that you can ask us questions at any time during the process by calling **1-800-204-2418**.

Q: What information and documents should I collect before beginning my application?

A: You will need the following information available for submitting an application for Reemployment Assistance:

- Social Security number

- Driver's License or State ID numb
- Employment information for the last 18 months for each employer:
- FEIN number (this is found on your W2 or 1099 tax form), if available
- Employer name (name on pay stub), address, and phone number
- First and last day of work
- Gross earnings (before taxes are taken out) covering the last 18 months
- Reason for separation

If you are one of the following, make sure you have this additional information available:

- Not a U.S. Citizen: Alien Registration Number or other work authorization form
- Military employee: Copy of your DD-214 Member 4 if you do not have the Member 4, then a copy of your Member 2-7 may be used
- Federal employee: SF-8 or SF-50
- Union member: Union name, hall number, and phone number

Reemployment Assistance Waivers for COVID-19

Q: I heard the waiting week for Reemployment Assistance has been waived, what does this mean?

A: DEO recently announced the waiving of the requirement to wait a week to receive Reemployment Assistance benefits beginning March 29, 2020 through May 8, 2020. Previously, after your claim was filed and accepted, the state of Florida required that you go through a “waiting week” during which no benefits would be paid to you. The waiting week has been waived so eligible Floridians may receive the support they need to help recover from the current economic impacts of COVID-19.

Q: The Governor waived the waiting week, why haven't I gotten paid?

A: Waiving the waiting week means that you will be eligible for benefits for the first week of unemployment, which you would generally not otherwise be eligible for if not for the waiver. Your claim first needs to be processed before the waiting week can be paid to determine if you are eligible for those benefits. You also need to claim your first two weeks of benefits before this week may be paid.

Q: I heard work registration requirements are waived, what does that mean?

A: Individuals filing an application for benefits from March 15, 2020 until May 2, 2020, will not be required to complete the work registration in Employ Florida. Even though you may be prompted to register, and you may receive messages on screens in the CONNECT system, you do not need to complete the registration if your application is filed between March 15, 2020 and May 2, 2020. If you completed your application prior to March 15, 2020, you must complete the online work registration.

Q: I heard work search requirements are waived, what does that mean?

A: The work search requirement is waived for individuals requesting benefits for the weeks of March 15, 2020 to May 2, 2020. However, you must fulfill the work search requirements for any weeks prior to March 15, 2020.

When completing the request, you will be asked questions about your ability and availability to look for work and any work and earnings you had for the weeks in unemployment you are claiming. If you did not search for work due to the waiver in Emergency Order No. DEO 20-11, you may put “no” when asked if you looked for work that week. Then, proceed through to the next step in the request process. If you answered that you did not search for work, you will not be asked to complete a work search log. However, you will be asked additional questions that need to be answered to proceed to the next step in the request process. Example questions may include: why did you not search for work; did you not have transportation; did you not have child care; or were you out of the area? If you did search for work, you may be asked to complete a work search log.

Q: I heard week certification requirements “claiming weeks” are waived, what does that mean?

A: In order to better serve you, Governor DeSantis suspended the bi-weekly reporting requirement. This means you do **not** have to log into CONNECT every two weeks to claim your weeks for Reemployment Assistance.

COVID-19 and Reemployment Assistance

Q: What resources are available for individuals, businesses and communities?

A: There are multiple state and federal resources available for individuals, businesses and communities. Visit [Floridajobs.org/COVID-19](https://floridajobs.org/COVID-19) for more information about the resources available.

Q: My employer has temporarily closed their business due to COVID-19. The date I was provided to return to work is within 8 weeks from the date I was laid off. How do I request Reemployment Assistance benefits?

A: You may be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits due to being on a temporary layoff. If you are on a temporary layoff, you do not need to seek work with other employers but must be able to work, stay in contact with your employer and be available to work when called back by your employer. An application can be filed online at FloridaJobs.org/COVID-19. If you have never filed for benefits in Florida before, select “**Apply Now.**”

Q: What if my layoff is permanent and my employer has closed their business due to COVID-19?

A: You may be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits if your employer has no work available, the business closed or your position was eliminated due to budget cuts and you have not been given a return to work date. However, to be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits, all other eligibility requirements must be met.

Q: My employer reduced my hours as a result of COVID-19. Will I be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits?

A: If your hours and earnings have been substantially reduced, you may be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits. All workers affected by COVID-19 are encouraged to apply for Reemployment Assistance benefits. The Reemployment Assistance team will review your application and determine your eligibility for benefits.

Q: My work is event-based, and many of my future jobs have been cancelled. Am I eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits?

A: If you are out of work because there is no work available, you may be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits.

Q: My local school district closed, and I must stay home with my children. Am I eligible to receive Reemployment Assistance benefits?

A: Reemployment Assistance benefits are available to individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own. If you are out of work due to personal reasons, you will not qualify for Reemployment Assistance benefits. You may be eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance under the CARES Act. You can file an application online to determine the possibility of receiving benefits.

Q: Do I need to complete a separate Reemployment Assistance benefits application because I have been financially impacted by Florida's mitigation efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19?

A: No, the standard Reemployment Assistance benefits application will be used for individuals impacted by efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. An application can be filed online at [Floridajobs.org/COVID-19](https://floridajobs.org/COVID-19). You will be notified if there is additional paperwork or information needed for the Reemployment Assistance team to completely review and process your application. However, you will need to complete a subsequent application for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). The CONNECT system will prompt you to fill out a PUA application once you are determined ineligible for regular Reemployment Assistance benefits. An additional application will need to be filled out for Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation, as provided under the CARES Act, and the Department will provide more information on this process in the near future.

Q: My employer has shut down operations temporarily because an employee is sick, and we have been asked to isolate or quarantine as a result of COVID-19. Am I eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits?

A: If your employer shuts down operations and no work is available, you may be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits. You can file an application online at FloridaJobs.org/RAApplication to determine if you are eligible to receive benefits.

Q: If I am forced to remain in my home because I am quarantined by a medical professional or by government direction, will I be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits?

A: You may be eligible to receive Reemployment Assistance benefits, but you must be able and available for work. You can complete an application to determine your eligibility for receiving Reemployment Assistance benefits.

Q: Do I have to look for other work if my employer temporarily closes because of COVID-19?

A: You do not have to look for work if you have a return to work date within eight weeks of your layoff date.

Q: What if my employer goes out of business as a result of COVID-19?

A: If all eligibility requirements are met, Reemployment Assistance benefits are available to individuals who are unemployed through no fault of their own. You can file an application online to determine the possibility of receiving Reemployment Assistance benefits.

Q: Are any benefits available if I'm out of work due to COVID-19 and I'm self-employed?

A: File an application online to determine the possibility of receiving state Reemployment Assistance benefits. Because of the CARES Act, individuals who are self-employed, independent contractors and those who are otherwise ineligible for state Reemployment Assistance benefits and those that have exhausted state and federal benefits may be eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). Eligibility does not include individuals who have the ability to telework and receive pay or individuals who are receiving paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits. PUA will provide up to \$275 in weekly benefits payments plus an additional \$600 in Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation

(FPUC). Please read more about the CARES Act programs in the CARES Act section of this resource guide.

Q: I am currently unemployed, but I feel the need to self-quarantine. Am I eligible for benefits?

A: You must be able and available for work to receive Reemployment Assistance benefits. Able to work means physically and mentally capable of performing the duties of the occupation in which work is being sought. Available for work means actively seeking and being ready and willing to accept suitable work. An individual may be considered available for work if there are no limitations placed on the individual that would constitute withdrawal from the labor market. If you are on a temporary layoff you must be available to work only for the employer that has temporarily laid you off.

Q: Do I have to report for my mandatory appointment at CareerSource center at this time?

A: Please contact the CareerSource center that has notified you about your appointment and find out what their procedures are, since in-person meetings may be limited and/or prohibited during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act

Q: What is the CARES Act?

A: On Friday, March 27, 2020, President Trump signed into law a \$2 trillion stimulus rescue package to aid individuals, businesses and communities throughout the nation affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19. This package is officially called the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, which provides economic relief and cash flow for those who need it.

Q: What programs are included in the CARES Act?

A: Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) - provides \$600 per week to any individual eligible under Florida law for Reemployment Assistance. This benefit is available for weeks claimed March 29, 2020 – July 31, 2020 in addition to the funds owed under Florida law to individuals.

* Due to the system upgrades in CONNECT, DEO began paying \$600 FPUC benefit payments the week of April 13. If you are eligible for Reemployment Assistance Benefits and have previously provided a bank account in the CONNECT system, you will receive a direct deposit to your account. If you did not provide your bank account, you will receive a check to the mailing address provided on your account.

Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) - provides benefits to those not ordinarily eligible for Reemployment Assistance. This includes individuals who are self-employed or contract employees. PUA will provide individuals with **up to** \$275 per week in benefits.

*Florida is currently working to distribute these funds to eligible individuals and will be providing more information.

Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) - allows for an additional 13 weeks of benefits added to the end of state Reemployment Assistance benefits. This means claimants may collect unemployment benefits for a longer period of time than under normal circumstances. PEUC will provide individuals with **up to** \$275 in weekly benefits.

*Florida is currently working to distribute these funds to eligible individuals and will be providing more information.

Q: What will the new CARES Act provide me for Reemployment Assistance?

A: For weeks claimed beginning March 29, 2020 the CARES Act provides eligible individuals with \$600 per week in addition to the weekly benefit amount determined under state law.

Q: If I am self-employed, do I need to file a claim online for Reemployment Assistance?

A: Yes, you will first need to file a claim online at FloridaJobs.org/RAApplication to see if you are eligible for a regular claim. After you have submitted your claim, continue to check your CONNECT account for updates on what additional information is needed.

Q: Do I need to submit an additional application to receive the additional \$600 per week on my unemployment claim?

A: No, if you have filed a new Reemployment Assistance benefits claim and it is being processed; or you have an existing RA claim, there is nothing you need to do to receive the additional benefits. DEO began paying the \$600 Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation benefits the week of April 13. If you are eligible for Reemployment Assistance Benefits and have previously provided a bank account in the CONNECT system, you will receive a direct deposit to your account. If you did not provide your bank account, you will receive a check to the mailing address provided on your account.

Q: Am I eligible for benefits if I am an independent contractor?

A: Yes, under the CARES Act, individuals who are self-employed, independent contractors and those that are otherwise ineligible for state Reemployment Assistance benefits and those that have exhausted state and federal benefits may be eligible for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance.

However, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance eligibility does not include individuals who have the ability to telework and receive pay or individuals who are receiving paid sick leave or other paid leave benefits.

In normal circumstances, individuals whose income is only from self-employment or work as an independent contractor are not normally eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits. However, if an independent contractor or self-employed individual also received wages through services performed as an employee (i.e., they had another job with an employer) during the base period (first 12 months of the past 15 months), he or she may be eligible for Reemployment Assistance benefits.

Q: Other states are accepting applications from individuals who don't normally qualify for Reemployment Assistance. Why isn't Florida? When can independent contractors, gig workers and others receive their benefits?

A: The Department is working diligently to incorporate the new Pandemic Unemployment Assistance provisions of the CARES Act to ensure that eligible individuals get the full amount of benefits they are owed. Benefits will be paid retroactively from when you became eligible under the CARES Act. The retroactivity is only applicable to the federal CARES Act Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program.

Q: Where do gig workers apply?

A: Gig workers will apply just like any other individual would apply for Reemployment Assistance benefits. They will fill out the regular Reemployment Assistance application to determine if they're eligible for regular Reemployment Assistance benefits, and if they're not, they will be directed to fill out a Pandemic Unemployment Assistance application.

Q: I was denied through CONNECT, but I am eligible through the federal government.

A: The Department will provide notification to individuals about their potential eligibility for Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) or Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation. If you are eligible for PEUC, you will have to fill out an application. For Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), CONNECT will prompt you to fill out a PUA application.

Q: What is the duration and maximum amount of benefits I can receive?

A: Florida's duration of benefits may adjust based on the state's unemployment rate, but the maximum amount of benefits remains the same. In addition, the CARES Act provides an additional \$600 per week to the weekly benefit amount until July 31, 2020.

2019 Claim Maximums: 12 weeks

- Weekly Benefit Amount (WBA): \$275
- Maximum Benefit Amount (MBA): \$3300

2020 Claim Maximums: 12 weeks

- Weekly Benefit Amount (WBA): \$275
- Maximum Benefit Amount (MBA): \$3300

Applying for Reemployment Assistance Benefits

Q: How do I submit my application for Reemployment Assistance?

A: There are multiple ways to submit an application for Reemployment Assistance.

- 1- New applicants can complete an application online at FloridaJobs.org/RAApplication.
- 2- Complete a paper application by following the steps online at FloridaJobs.org/COVID-19. Then mail your application to:

Florida Department of Economic Opportunity
P.O. Box 5350
Tallahassee, FL 32314-5350
- 3- CareerSource centers throughout the state can offer assistance with paper applications. Please visit CareerSourceFlorida.com to find website and contact information for your local career center. We recommend calling to confirm your local center's hours of operation.
- 4- FedEx is also offering Floridians the option to print and mail applications in storefronts located throughout the state free of charge. Please visit FedEx.com for a location near you. You can also complete an application online at FloridaJobs.org/COVID-19.

*If you have questions or need assistance completing your application online, you can contact DEO at 1-800-204-2418 for assistance.

Q: What are the hours of operation?

A: The CONNECT system is available from 7:00 a.m.- 8:00 p.m., 7 days a week. CONNECT is Florida's Reemployment Assistance claims system. CONNECT offers access to file, manage, and review your claim details.

The Contact Center is also available. The hours of operation are Monday through Friday 7:30 AM to 6:30 PM and Saturday and Sunday 8 AM to 5 PM EST. Please call 1-800-204-2418 for assistance

Q: Does the new application (FloridaJobs.org/RAApplication) connect to the CONNECT system?

A: The new mobile app does not connect to CONNECT. However, the information submitted in the app will be transferred to CONNECT.

Q: How will I know if I am eligible or ineligible?

A: If you are eligible, you will receive written determination stating your eligibility.

If you are not eligible, the written determination will explain the reason your claim was denied and will explain your appeal rights. If you disagree with a determination that denies benefits, you may request an appeal hearing.

* Be sure to check your CONNECT account for any updates. This includes your benefit payments and important notices regarding your account.

Q: Will I receive confirmation after my application is submitted and received?

A: After your Reemployment Assistance application has been processed, you will be notified of your eligibility. Read below for the communication methods for each application.

If I submitted a paper application:

You will receive a phone call, email or letter after your application has been processed. Based on your eligibility, you may receive benefits or you have the option to appeal your determination if it negatively impacts you.

If I submitted an online application through FloridaJobs.org/RAApplication:

You will receive a phone call, email or letter after your application has been processed. Based on your eligibility, you may receive benefits or you have the option to appeal your determination if it negatively impacts you.

If I submitted an online application through CONNECT:

You will receive confirmation in the CONNECT system that your application has been submitted. Once your application has been processed and your eligibility has been determined, you may receive benefits or you have the option to appeal your determination if it negatively impacts you.

Please login to the CONNECT system to check for any updates to your account, respond to any requests for additional. If you have questions or need assistance, contact DEO at 1-800-204-2418.

Q: Is there a location where I can get a paper application?

A: Yes, CareerSource centers throughout the state can offer assistance with paper applications. Please visit CareerSourceFlorida.com to find website and contact information for your local career center. FedEx is also offering Floridians the option to print and mail applications in storefronts located throughout the state free of charge. Please visit [click here](#) to find a location near you (<https://local.fedex.com/en-us/fl/>). You can also complete an application online at FloridaJobs.org/COVID-19. If you have questions or need assistance completing your application online, you can contact DEO at 1-800-204-2418 for assistance or use the new CHAT feature on FloridaJobs.org.

Q: I made a mistake on my claim. How do I edit?

A: You will need to contact the contact center at 1-800-204-2418 for assistance. This is why it's very important to review your application before you submit it. You can make changes in the review process, but once it's submitted, the claimant cannot make any changes themselves.

Q: I am missing a piece of information, should I still file?

A: Missing information will create additional delays in determining your eligibility. However, if missing information is unavoidable, your claim may still be processed.

Q: What do I do once I complete my application?

A: You are required to complete a few additional items after completing your application. Governor DeSantis has cut bureaucratic processes to ensure reemployment claims are processed and paid as quickly as possible.

- **Request Benefit Payment**

In order to better serve you, Governor DeSantis suspended the bi-weekly reporting requirement. This means you do **not** have to log into CONNECT every two weeks to claim your weeks of reemployment assistance.

- **Workforce Registration- DEO has suspended this requirement for any claims filed with an effective date of March 15, 2020, through the week ending May 2, 2020.**

Under normal circumstances, you are required to register with Employ Florida. When creating (or updating) your Employ Florida profile, you must provide a valid e-mail address, upload or create a current resume, and complete background history on your profile. Please see these step-by-step instructions for more information. If you filed a claim prior to March 15, this requirement is still applicable to you.

- **Work Search Contacts- DEO has suspended this requirement beginning the week of March 15, 2020 through the week ending May 2, 2020.**

You are required to provide five work search contacts for every week of benefits you request from the department. This is only applicable to applicants that apply for benefits before March 15 and after May 2.

- **Any incomplete fact-findings**

During the initial processing of your claim, many reviews occur regarding your eligibility for benefits. You will be mailed correspondence or sent an email reminder to check your CONNECT inbox based on your selected contact method. Please complete any requests for information as soon as possible. Any correspondence received via mail can be completed online. You can fax completed forms to 1-877-934-1504.

- **Watch for your notice of monetary determination**

This notice will provide details on the amount of benefits you can receive per week (weekly benefit amount), the total balance your claim has (maximum benefit amount), as well as the history of wages that has established your claim.

- **Appointment with your local CareerSource office**

You may be selected and scheduled for a mandatory appointment with your local CareerSource office. It will provide one-on-one services to help create a reemployment plan.

Your appointment notice will be mailed to you, so please ensure your address in both CONNECT and Employ Florida are up-to-date. Failure to participate in your scheduled appointment will result in a review of your eligibility and potentially delay or deny your benefits.

Q: I have filed a Reemployment Assistance claim previously (more than 12 months ago); do I need to file another claim?

A: Yes, you will need to file another Reemployment Assistance claim. However, you will need to file your claim in the CONNECT system because you have an account that has been created previously.

Q: I have already filed within the last year; do I need to file another claim?

A: If your previous claim has a remaining balance and has not expired, you need to file a “Reopen” request after logging into your CONNECT account. This is a shortened application to update your work history since your original application was filed. Once completed, any recent employment will be reviewed, and weeks of benefits will be scheduled for you to claim.

Q: What if my employer fails to respond?

A: If they fail to respond to a request for information by their deadline, a determination will be made with the available information.

Q: Why are you asking about my old employer? I have worked somewhere else, and I am not filing against them.

A: All employers during the last 18 months are reviewed and contacted regarding your employment. You cannot choose which employer is part of your RA claim. Please respond to all requests for information to ensure timely processing.

Q: What is considered being “able and available” for work?

A: Being able to seek and accept full-time work as well as having the availability to accept a full-time schedule. Below are some related examples that could impact your eligibility:

- Any illness or injury during the majority of a week (including hospital stays)
- Travel without the intent of seeking work & relocating
- A lack of childcare that interrupts your ability to find work
- Your school schedule conflicts with your ability to work full-time

Q: I still have questions about completing my Reemployment Assistance

Application. Who do I contact?

A: You have multiple options if you need assistance or have questions about completing your Reemployment Assistance Application.

- 1- Virtual assistance is available [here](https://visualivr.connect.myflorida.com/fish-messaging/go/Q5uZriw-): (<https://visualivr.connect.myflorida.com/fish-messaging/go/Q5uZriw->)
- 2- Complete the Reemployment Assistance Contact Form Found [here](https://racontactus.floridajobs.org): (racontactus.floridajobs.org)
- 3- Contact the Reemployment Assistance operator at 1-800-204-2418.
- 4- Your local CareerSource center for assistance and questions about completing your application. Please visit [CareerSourceFlorida.com](https://www.careersourceflorida.com) to find website and contact information for your local career center. We recommend you call your CareerSource center to check their hours of operation.

Q: Are Reemployment Assistance benefits taxed?

A: Yes, benefits are a taxable income. You can elect to withhold 10% of your weekly benefits due with the IRS. This can be handled after logging into your claim under "View and Maintain Account Information" and selecting "Payment Method and Tax Withholding Options."

Q: What is a 1099-G?

A: The 1099-G is the tax form the department issues in January for the purposes of filing your taxes. The 1099-G will detail the amount of benefits paid to you during a specific year as well as any amounts withheld and paid to the IRS. They are made available by January 31st for the prior tax year.

Q: What is a 49T?

A: The form 49T is a receipt of repayment that provides the amount paid to a Reemployment Assistance overpayment in a specific tax year. You can log into CONNECT and click on "My 1099G/49T" to view the forms.

Q: How can I obtain a copy of my 1099-G and/or 49T for a tax year?

A: You can receive a copy of your 1099-G/49T multiple ways:

- The fastest way to receive your 1099-G or 49T is by selecting "electronic" as your correspondence method within the CONNECT system. You can login to CONNECT and go to "My 1099-G & 49Ts" in the main menu to view the last five years of your 1099-G or 49T documents. A copy will be mailed by January 31st to the address on record if you selected "US Mail" as your correspondence type. Please keep your address updated in CONNECT. If you have mail forwarding, the United States Postal Service will forward your tax forms.
- You can request a copy of your 1099-G from the last five years by e-mailing 1099G@deo.myflorida.com. Please include your name, last 4 digits of your Social Security number, previous address on file, current street address, a valid contact number, and the tax year you are requesting.
- You can speak with an agent at 1-800-204-2418 who can assist in regaining access to your claim and/or submitting a request to issue duplicate information on your behalf.

Q: Why did I get a 1099-G for a year that I did not request benefits?

A: Sometimes this occurs when your last weeks of benefits were paid at the beginning of the year. Other times, the department may complete the appeal process that releases payments at a significantly later date. The easiest way to check on why a 1099-G was issued would be to log into CONNECT and review the “Payment History.”

Q: My account says I am inactive. Should I apply in the new application?

A: No. Only people who have never filed for Reemployment Assistance should file in the new application.

Q: DEO issued a paper application, does this mean individuals cannot get onto the online system? Can they access it now or should they send in a paper application?

A: No. There may be times that CONNECT is not accessible, but individuals are still encouraged to apply online. Paper applications should only be submitted if you are unable to apply online.

Q: I am having difficulty opening my 1099-G. What do I do?

A:

- Verify Adobe Acrobat Reader is installed and up-to-date.
- Disable pop-up blockers in your browser. The 1099-G opens as a pop-up window.
- Scroll Down when the PDF opens. The distributed forms are 2 pages long: Letterhead and 1099-G.
- Use Internet Explorer 11. Our system is most compatible with Internet Explorer 11, other browsers may experience issues.
- If you continue to receive technical errors even after making these adjustments, please contact the department at 1-800-204-2418.

Q: I can't reset my PIN, should I use the new online system?

A: No. Only people who have never filed for Reemployment Assistance should file in the new application.

Q: When and how will I get my PIN for CONNECT if I applied through the new online application or on paper?

A: Once your application is received and reviewed, the Department will be in contact with you, either by phone or email.

CONNECT

Q: What is CONNECT?

A: CONNECT is Florida's Reemployment Assistance claims system. CONNECT offers access to file, manage, and review your claim details 24/7.

Q: Can I use my mobile device to file a claim or manage my benefits in the CONNECT System?

A: At this time, mobile devices are not supported with our claims system, CONNECT.

Q: How do I register for an account in CONNECT?

A: If you have never filed a claim through DEO, you are a New Claimant. To set up a Claimant account and obtain a user ID and PIN, you must begin the process to apply for benefits.

Follow the below steps to set up a Claimant account and obtain a user ID and PIN.

1. On the Claimant Login Page, select the 'File a New Claim' link from the left hand menu or from the middle of the page.
2. You will land on the 'Initial Questions' screen.
3. Scroll to the bottom of the screen and select "Start the Reemployment Assistance Application."
4. You will land on the "Reemployment Assistance Fraud" screen.
5. Review the questions, scroll to the bottom of the page, and select 'I acknowledge that I understand this statement and wish to continue to file my claim,' select 'Next.'
6. The 'Information Checklist' screen will populate.
7. Review the questions, scroll to the bottom of the page, and select 'I acknowledge that I understand this statement and wish to continue to file my claim,' select 'Next.'
8. The 'Information Checklist' screen will populate.
9. Review the information, scroll to the bottom of the page, and select 'Next.'
10. The 'Privacy Act Statement' page will populate.
11. Review the information, select 'Yes.' Then select the 'Next' button to continue.
12. The 'Claimant Authentication' page will populate.
13. Enter the required information, select the 'Submit' button to continue.
14. The 'Set PIN' screen will populate – here, you will need to create and enter a 4 digit PIN and choose security questions, select 'Submit' to complete the process of setting up your login ID and PIN.

Q: Are there certain requirements or criteria for creating my PIN?

A: Yes, please make sure your PIN meets the following criteria:

- Your PIN must be four digits.
- Your PIN can only be numbers. Letters and symbols are not allowed.
- Your PIN cannot be the numbers 1111, 9999, 0000, or 1234.
- Your PIN cannot be the last 4 digits of your social security number.

Q: Are there any restrictions for the security question answers?

A: Yes, please make sure your security question answers meet the following criteria:

- Your answers must use letters and numbers.
- Special characters are not allowed.
- Your answers must be between 5 and 35 characters in length.

Q: How can I reset my PIN to access my CONNECT profile?

A: There are two options to have your pin reset.

- After entering your Social Security number on the CONNECT login page, select the “**Forgot PIN**” option to reset your PIN after verifying your information.
- If it is necessary, you can submit documents verifying your identity to the department. Please provide a signed copy of your Social Security card and a copy of your valid driver’s license or state ID. These can be sent by fax or email to, Fax: 321-332-6608 or E-mail: IdentityRequest@deo.myflorida.com

** If you are unable to reset your PIN through the options above, contact us at **1-800-297-0586**.

Q: I received a technical error in CONNECT. What do I do?

A: There are two common causes to technical issues with CONNECT:

- CONNECT is not compatible with mobile devices. CONNECT was designed for desktop computers.
- CONNECT is most compatible with Internet Explorer, but also works in other internet browsers.

If you continue to receive technical errors after making these adjustments, please contact the department at 1-800-204-2418.

Q: When I enter my Social Security Number, Driver’s License, and/or State ID, the system says the information is not valid. What do I do?

A: Please verify you are submitting the information exactly as it appears on your documents. If the system continues to report that information is not valid, after your third attempt, the system will accept the information you are providing. If this happens, your claim will be followed-up with a request for you to provide copies of your signed Social Security card and your valid Driver’s License or State ID card. The department will use this information to confirm your identity.

Q: Sometimes the CONNECT system tells me to call back later. Why is that?

A: We experience periods of high call volume. If you are unable to reach the department by phone, please submit an e-mail for information regarding your claim. If you have a claim, please use the e-mail address you have provided in CONNECT. The Reemployment Assistance contact us form can be found online, [here \(http://racontactus.floridajobs.org/\)](http://racontactus.floridajobs.org/)

Q: I'm locked out of my account. It says I need to verify my identity, but no one will answer the phone or respond to my email. What do I do?

A: At this time, we do not need additional documentation to verify the identity as long as the application is fully complete and submitted. If any additional information is needed, a DEO associate will reach out to the individual.

Q: I used to have notices in my Inbox. Why don't I see anything in my Inbox?

A: After you review an item in your inbox, it is hidden to make room for new notifications. You can use the search functions in the Inbox to pull up previously viewed correspondence. If you want all items displayed, select the "Search" button with no search information entered. All correspondence will show in your inbox.

Q: I am having trouble opening items in my CONNECT inbox. How can I access these documents?

A: Please verify the following as these are common issues surrounding opening correspondence:

- Adobe Acrobat Reader is installed and up-to-date
- You are using a computer, not a mobile device such as a cell phone or tablet
- Make sure you are using a compatible browser
- Disable any pop-up blockers that may prevent PDF documents from opening

Q: I received an email and/or text from DEO saying I needed to log-in to CONNECT to view my messages, but I don't have any messages.

A: This is a system error due to the large volume of claims we are receiving. Items sent to your Inbox may take a few days to arrive. Please check your Inbox at a later date to confirm receipt of any correspondence after initially filing your claim.

Q: CONNECT will not allow me to continue without completing my work search and work registration requirement. I thought the Governor waived this. Why can't I complete my claim?

A: The work registration and work search requirements have been waived for individuals requesting benefits for the weeks of March 15, 2020 to May 2, 2020, due to COVID-19. You do not need to complete the work registration. If you answer "no" to the question asking if you looked for work when you are claiming your weeks, you will not be asked to complete a work search log. However, you will be asked some additional questions. Please be aware that your claim will not be affected if you answer no to this question during this timeframe. Governor DeSantis also suspended the bi-weekly reporting requirement which means you will not be required to log into CONNECT every two weeks to claim your weeks of reemployment assistance. Please continue to check CONNECT for any important updates to your account.

Q: Why does CONNECT undergo so much maintenance, and why is it unavailable to users at certain times?

A: It needs to come down so that the system can run required updates and process the information that was submitted so that claims can be processed and benefit payments be issued.

Q: How do I change the type of communication I receive?

A: After login to CONNECT:

1. Select “View and Maintain Account Information” in the main menu.
2. Select “Contact Information” option.
3. Select “Edit”.
4. Select your new “Correspondence Preference.”
5. Make sure your contact information is up-to-date.
6. Select “Submit”.

Q: When I submit my fact-finding questions, why do I get logged out and CONNECT doesn't save my answers?

A: Please be aware CONNECT may log you out of the system after periods of inactivity. If you spend too much time without changing pages in CONNECT, you will be logged out for security purposes. Please make sure if you have a large amount of information to provide in your fact-finding that you select “Save” at the bottom of the page frequently to avoid losing any information.

Q: Was the supplemental documentation I uploaded received in CONNECT?

A: When you attach additional documents to your fact-finding, the form will show which documents have been successfully attached prior to submission. Please verify the documents you wish to submit are listed PRIOR to sending your fact-finding. When you submit your documents, you will receive an error if they are not received successfully.

Q: What happens after I submit my application for Reemployment Assistance?

A: You will receive a phone call, email or letter after your application has been processed. Based on your eligibility, you will receive benefits or you have the option to appeal your determination if it negatively impacts you.

Please login to the CONNECT system regularly to check for any updates to your account, respond to any requests for additional information. If you have questions or need assistance, contact DEO at 1-800-204-2418.

Q: I am having trouble entering my citizenship/work authorization information.

A: Please enter the number of the authorizing document you are able to provide. If you continue to have difficulties, the system will accept your information after several attempts. However, a copy of your document will be requested after your application is completed.

Q: Do I need to enter an employer I only worked with a short time?

A: Yes, your entire work history is required from the last 18 months. Regardless of the length of time worked, all employment is used in determining your benefits.

Q: I cannot enter one of my employers in the CONNECT application, what do I do?

A: Please check for the following common mistakes. Make sure:

- There are no mistakes with the start and end dates
- The employment end date is during or after the base period indicated by CONNECT
- The employment is not already on the claim. You can use the “Previous” button to return and check.
- Carefully review the error message you receive as this will try to assist in correcting the error. If the problem persists, please contact the department at 1-800-204-2418 for assistance.

Q: What do I do once I complete my application in CONNECT?

A: You are required to complete a few additional items after completing your application. Governor DeSantis has cut bureaucratic processes to ensure reemployment claims are processed and paid as quickly as possible.

- **Request Benefit Payment**

In order to better serve you, Governor DeSantis suspended the bi-weekly reporting requirement. This means you do **not** have to log into CONNECT every two weeks to claim your weeks of reemployment assistance.

- **Workforce Registration- DEO has suspended this requirement for any claims filed with an effective date of March 15, 2020, through the week ending May 2, 2020.**

Under normal circumstances, you are required to register with Employ Florida. When creating (or updating) your EF profile, you must provide a valid e-mail address, upload or create a current resume, and complete background history on your profile. Please see these step-by-step instructions for more information. If you filed a claim prior to March 15, this requirement is still applicable to you.

- **Work Search Contacts- DEO has suspended this requirement beginning the week of March 15, 2020 through the week ending May 2, 2020.**

You are required to provide five work search contacts for every week of benefits you request from the department. The suspension of these work search requirements applies to weeks claimed after March 15, 2020 and ends May 2, 2020.

- **Any incomplete fact-findings**

During the initial processing of your claim, many reviews occur regarding your eligibility for benefits. You will be mailed correspondence or sent an email reminder to check your CONNECT inbox based on your selected contact method. Please complete any requests for information as soon as possible. Any correspondence received via mail can be completed online. You can fax completed forms to 1-877-934-1504.

- **Watch for your notice of monetary determination**

This notice will provide details on the amount of benefits you can receive per week (weekly benefit amount), the total balance your claim has (maximum benefit amount), as well as the history of wages that has established your claim.

- **Appointment with your local CareerSource office**

You may be selected and scheduled for a mandatory appointment with your local

CareerSource office. It will provide one-on-one services to help create a reemployment plan. Your appointment notice will be mailed to you, so please ensure your address in both CONNECT and Employ Florida are up-to-date. Failure to participate in your scheduled appointment will result in a review of your eligibility and potentially delay or deny your benefits.

Q: Will I be paid for my waiting week? Do I have to serve a waiting week each time I reactivate my claim?

A: The waiting week has been waived for claims filed after March 29, 2020, so you will be paid for your waiting week if you filed your claim after March 29, 2020.

Q: What is a valid work search contact and what information do you need?

A: You are required to provide the following details for each job contact:

- Date of contact
- Method of contact (in person, online, fax, phone, etc.)
- Business name including telephone number & complete address, website URL or an e-mail
- Results of your search
- Type of work sought

Q: How many work search contacts do I need to provide to the department per benefit week?

A: DEO has suspended this requirement beginning the week of March 15, 2020 through the week ending May 2, 2020. Prior to COVID-19, you are required to provide five work search contacts per week. The following are exceptions and exemptions:

- If you reside in a low-population county, you are required to submit three contacts weekly
- If you are a union member, you are required to remain in good standing and maintain regular contact with your Union.
- If you are on a temporary layoff and will return to the same employer within 8 weeks, you are exempt from work search requirements.
- If you are a part of an approved training program, you are exempt from work search requirements.
- If you qualify for one of these exemptions and still receive a request for full work search information, please contact us at 1-800-204-2418 for assistance.

Q: I cannot log on to CONNECT, how does this impact my benefits?

A: Your benefits will not be impacted. In order to better to serve you, Governor DeSantis suspended the bi-weekly reporting requirement. This means you do **not** have to log into CONNECT every two weeks to claim your weeks of reemployment assistance.

Q: I haven't been able to claim my weeks because I can't log-on to CONNECT.

Will I lose my benefits for that week?

A: No. If you were unable to claim your weeks because you could not log-on to CONNECT, you will not lose your benefits for that week. In order to better to serve you, Governor DeSantis suspended the bi-weekly reporting requirement. This means you do **not** have to log into CONNECT every two weeks to claim your weeks of reemployment assistance.

Q: My claim says it is under review, what does this mean?

A: Under review means the claim is being authenticated or your identity is being confirmed.

Q: My claim still says pending. What does this mean?

A: Pending means that a determination has not been made on your claim.

Q: What does active versus pending mean for my claims?

A: Active is referring to your claim status and that your benefit year has been established. Pending means a determination has not been made.

Q: How do I know when to file my weeks? What do I do if I can't log-on to file my weeks? I missed my deadline to file a claim because CONNECT was down. What do I do?

A: At the end of your application, it will tell you what dates you need to come back into CONNECT and claim your weeks. However, in order to better to serve you, Governor DeSantis suspended the bi-weekly reporting requirement. This means you do **not** have to log into CONNECT every two weeks to claim your weeks of reemployment assistance.

Receiving Reemployment Assistance Benefit Payments

Q: How will I receive the benefits once my Reemployment Assistance application has been processed?

A: Floridians have two options for receiving benefits. You have the option to select how you receive benefits during the application process.

- 1- Direct Deposit-** This process may take 1-2 business days to reflect in your bank account after your application has been processed. Please note, due to the high volume of requests, this process may take longer than usual, or
- 2- Way2Go Debit Card-** Debit cards are mailed after the first payment is processed and may take 7-10 business days to receive by mail. Please note, due to the high volume of requests, this process may take longer than usual.

Q: When will I receive my debit card?

A: The Way2Go debit card will be issued by mail after the first payment on your claim is made via debit card. If you have previously been issued a debit card, it is valid for three years from the initial issue date. Your previous card will receive any payments on your current claim. If you have lost your previous debit card and/or have not received your debit card 10 business days after your first debit payment, please contact our card provider at:

U.S.: 1-833-888-2780

International: 1-210-334-6615 (This includes Puerto Rico. This line is not toll-free)

Q: How do I change how I get paid? I want to get direct deposit versus debit card.

A: You can log into CONNECT and change this information yourself under the “View and Maintain Account Information.”

Q: Why do I have a negative balance on my debit card?

A: The debit card provider has certain fees associated with the card. This includes a limited number of contacts to their phone lines per month. Please review the information issued with your card for more details surrounding these fees. Our card provides additional methods to check your balance including SMS notifications (text messages), checking at approved ATMs, as well as a web portal to view your balance information. Please visit www.goprogram.com for more information.

Q: Why isn't my CONNECT PIN working for my debit card?

A: Your CONNECT PIN is separate from the debit card PIN. You will need to follow the instructions included with the debit card in order to activate and establish a PIN.

Q: Why can't I enter my banking information on CONNECT?

A: There are several reasons your banking information may be rejected:

- The information you entered is incorrect.
- The interface to verify the information is currently down.
- Your bank is not approved for direct deposit.
- You are attempting to use a prepaid card for direct deposit purposes.
- Not every financial institution is accepted; your bank may not be eligible for direct deposit. Please select debit card if you have no other financial institution.

Q: What is the duration and maximum amount of benefits I can receive?

A: Florida's duration of benefits may adjust based on the state's unemployment rate, but the maximum amount of benefits remains the same.

2019 Claim Maximums: 12 weeks

- Weekly Benefit Amount (WBA): \$275
- Maximum Benefit Amount (MBA): \$3300

2020 Claim Maximums: 12 weeks

- Weekly Benefit Amount (WBA): \$275
- Maximum Benefit Amount (MBA): \$3300

Q: How are my benefits calculated?

A:

- The wages used to determine your benefit amounts are the first four of the last five calendar quarters.
- Claims filed as of April 1, 2020 use wages earned between 01/01/2019 through 12/31/2019.
- Once we have the wages on record, we verify the following to determine if you are eligible for benefits:
 - \$3400 minimum gross earnings during base period.
 - You must have a minimum of two quarters of covered wages.
 - Total base period gross wages must be more than 1.5x the highest wage quarter.
- Once we complete those checks, the last steps are simple: Weekly Benefit Amount (WBA)
 - WBA is the highest quarter divided by 26 OR the weekly amount \$275, whichever is less
 - Maximum Benefit Amount (MBA)
 - MBA is your total base period wages divided by 4 OR the yearly maximum, whichever is less

Q: I do not see my employer on my monetary determination. Why is that?

A: This could be due to several factors:

- It is possible your employment was not during the base period under review.
- Your employment and wages may not have been covered wages for Reemployment Assistance purposes.
- It is possible the wages you earned were reported incorrectly or reported late.
- There are two quick steps to check for common issues: Verify the missing employment is during the base period under review.
- Verify your information (specifically your Social Security number) is correct on any tax forms.

If you find an error or if you still have concerns regarding your missing wages, you can submit for monetary reconsideration following the instructions on your monetary determination. This must be requested within 20 days of the monetary determination date.

Q: After filing a claim, my remaining balance was low. I went back to work, why do I not have more money available?

A: You cannot receive more than the maximum benefit amount allocated during a claim's benefit year.

Q: I see that I have benefits available on an older claim, am I able to receive this money?

A: Once the claim passes its expiration date, the funds are no longer available, and a new claim must be filed and reviewed for eligibility.

Q: What changes were made to the Reemployment Assistance (RA) debit card?

A: The state of Florida has changed debit card providers. The Wells Fargo Visa-Branded EPPICard Program stopped receiving funds as of Oct 25th, 2019, and the card itself will no longer be valid as of December 11th, 2019. A new Comerica Mastercard-Branded Way2Go Card Prepaid Debit Card was issued 2-3 weeks prior to the changeover. Any RA benefits received after Oct 25th, 2019, will go to this new card. You will not receive a new Way2Go Card if you are not actively receiving benefits.

Q: I am no longer receiving Reemployment Assistance benefits. Why am I receiving a notice regarding the RA debit card?

A: The notice would be received because our records indicate that you have an outstanding balance on your EPPICard from when you were receiving benefits. The funds will no longer be accessible on the card after December 11, 2019. If you have any additional questions about accessing your card balance call 1-888-898-3584.

Q: What happens if I do not use the funds on my current card?

A: Your EPPICard will no longer be valid after December 11th, 2019. If you are currently collecting RA benefits, any remaining balance will be transferred to the new Way2Go Card. If you do not have an active RA claim, you will no longer have access to your funds after the deadline. You may contact customer service at 1-888-898-3584 to receive instructions on how to get the remaining funds.

Q: Can I transfer the remaining balance on the current card to a bank account?

A: Yes, you can transfer the remaining balance to any US-based bank account that you own by calling the Customer Service automated line at 1-888-898-3584. There is a \$1.50 charge per transfer. If you are currently collecting RA benefits, changing to direct deposit in CONNECT will only affect future payments.

Q: Is the current card still valid even if I receive and activate the new card?

A: Yes, funds that had been sent to your EPPICard are available until December 11, 2019. Any RA benefits sent to you on or after October 25, 2019 will only be accessible on the new Way2Go card.

Q: Are my funds accessible by both the current and new card?

A: No, they are separate balances. All payments until October 24, 2019, are made to the EPPICard. All payments made October 25, 2019 onward are made to the Way2Go Card. Any balance remaining on your EPPICard as of December 11, 2019, will be transferred to the Way2Go Card.

Q: What steps do I need to take to set up my new card?

A: You will need to go to GoProgram.com and create a user ID and password. Make sure that you have your new Way2Go Card with you when you go to register your new account. If you have any issues, call their Customer Service line at 1-833-888-2780.

Q: When can I expect to get paid?

A: Prior to the COVID-19 epidemic, it took three to four weeks (assuming there were no issues with the claim) to process a claim. We do not have an exact timeframe of when individuals will get paid. However, we are working diligently to process claims as quickly as possible.

Adjudication

Q: What is the adjudication process?

A: The department will review the details surrounding an issue to determine your eligibility for benefits. Involved parties will receive a fact-finding to request the necessary information to make a determination. An adjudicator may contact you or an employer to clarify any received details before making a determination. This contact may be by phone, e-mail, or through your CONNECT Inbox.

Q: Why does my claim say it is pending for adjudication? Why does my monetary determination say I have a pending eligibility issue?

A: Anytime your claim has a pending item for resolution, you will have a message indicating that your claim is pending for adjudication. While this frequently means payments must remain on hold until after the review is completed, some issues do not hold benefit payment and are merely background reviews or verifications.

Q: How long is the adjudication process?

A: Time frames vary based on several factors including the depth of the issue being reviewed. Usually, adjudication time frames fluctuate between two to six weeks.

Q: I received eligible determinations, why haven't I been paid yet?

A: Issues are reviewed separately. While you may receive an eligible determination, you may still have additional issues pending for review. Payments cannot process until all determinations have been completed and you have no disqualifications.

Q: Why have I not received a determination after completing my fact-finding?

A: Responding to a fact-finding does not complete the review on an issue. The employer must respond (or fail to respond by their deadline) and an adjudicator must be available to review all submitted forms.

Q: Can I speak with an adjudicator?

A: Most issues under review do not require direct contact with an adjudicator for a determination to be made. Adjudicators review the fact-finding collected regarding the issues they review and will make a determination based on the available information. It is important that you complete any fact-findings as thoroughly as possible. An adjudicator will contact you if they need more information.

Q: I missed a call from an adjudicator. What do I do?

A: Please review their voicemail carefully. They may request that you speak with them directly and set a return call deadline. Other times they may request that you log into CONNECT and complete additional fact-finding questions so they can render a determination.

Q: I disagree with my adjudication determination, now what do I do?

A: You have the right to appeal the determination if you disagree with the “Reasoning & Findings” of the determination. [Click here to file an appeal.](#)

Q: I have disqualified weeks. What does that mean?

A: Disqualified weeks will not release payment because of an adjudicator’s determination. Verify the related disqualification by checking the “Determination, Pending Issues and Decision Summary” section of CONNECT.

Appeals

Q: What if I don't agree with my Reemployment Assistance benefit determination?

A: You have the option to request an appeal with our team within 20 calendar days after the distributed date of the determination. Visit FloridaJobs.org/COVID-19 to download a Notice of Appeals Form.

*Select one of the options below to submit your request for an appeal.

Online: through CONNECT

Email: RA.AppealsClerks@deo.myflorida.com

Mail: Office of Appeals

P.O. Box 5250,

Tallahassee, FL 32399-5250

Fax: 850-617-6504

Q: I've been denied unemployment, but I was let go because of COVID-19. Do I need to submit an appeal?

A: You may submit an appeal if you receive a determination that negatively impacts you. Your determination will have appeal rights that provide you with the necessary information on how to file your appeal.

Q: Was my request for monetary reconsideration received?

A: CONNECT will not display a confirmation screen when submitted. Verify the request was received by checking the "Determination, Pending Issues and Decision Summary" section of CONNECT and reviewing the "Monetary Pending Issues" section. You should see a pending item attached to the employer's name that you reported wage issues on.

Q: What is an appeal hearing?

A: An appeal hearing is scheduled when you or an employer disagree with a Department determination and wish to have a hearing with an appeals referee. To protect your rights, participating in the hearing is important, even if the other party filed the appeal. The decision from this hearing will replace the determination that was appealed.

Q: How do I file an appeal?

A: You must request an appeal hearing within 20 calendar days after the distributed date of the determination. If the 20th day falls on a Saturday, Sunday or legal holiday you may file the appeal the next business day. You may submit your request for an appeal by mail, fax, email, or online through CONNECT. Please complete a Notice of Appeal for your request by mail or fax. Please use the CONNECT guide to file online. To submit by email, attach your Notice of Appeal and send to RA.AppealsClerks@deo.myflorida.com

Q: How do I file a late appeal?

A: If you miss the 20-day period, it is more than 90 days from the date of determination, and you would like to request a late appeal, you may fax, email or mail the request and include justification for the late appeal.

Fax: 850-617-6504

Email: DEOAppeals.Magistrate@deo.myflorida.com

Mail: Office of Appeals

P.O. Box 5250

Tallahassee, FL 32399-5250

Q: How do I know an appeal was filed?

A: You will receive notification in your CONNECT inbox or by mail depending on your correspondence preference.

Q: Should I continue to request benefit payment?

A: Yes, as long as you are unemployed, even if a hearing was requested or held, a decision was issued, or an appeal was made to the RA Appeals Commission or Judicial Court. Be sure that you continue to follow all other instructions from the RA office.

Q: Where are hearings held?

A: Appeal hearings are held by telephone. You will receive a Notice of Hearing indicating the date and time an appeals referee will be calling you for your hearing.

Q: How is the appeal hearing conducted?

A: The hearing officer will call you on the day and time of your scheduled hearing. The hearing is your opportunity to present all information, including verbal statements and documentation. During the hearing, you will have an opportunity to respond to questions and provide information about the noticed issue. If there are other parties or witnesses present during the hearing, you will also be able to hear their testimony and ask them questions. If you provided or received documents for the hearing, the documents may be discussed during the hearing.

Q: What happens if I don't participate?

A: If the party who filed the appeal participates, a hearing will be held. The decision will be based on the evidence presented. If you do not participate, your evidence will not be considered. If you filed the appeal and do not participate, your case will be dismissed.

Q: How can I arrange for witnesses?

A: Contact and ask the witness to testify. The best witness is one with personal knowledge of the facts. A witness who was present at an event is much better than one who was told about it by someone else. If possible, you and your witness(es) should be at the same location for the hearing. If a witness cannot be at your location and must be contacted at a different telephone number, provide the witness' name and telephone number to the Office of Appeals by phone, fax, or mail. Instruct the witness to be available at the scheduled hearing time and to remain available until dismissed by you or the appeals referee. If a witness refuses to testify voluntarily, a subpoena can be requested by writing to the address on the Notice of Hearing.

Mail or fax the request as soon as possible, so the subpoena can be served before the hearing. Include the case docket number; the witness' name, address, and telephone number (if available), as well as a detailed description of any document(s) the witness should furnish for the hearing.

**Office of Appeals
P.O. Box 5250
Tallahassee, FL 32399-5250
Fax number: 850-617-6504**

Q: What if I need a translator?

A: Translation will be arranged for parties who indicate a primary language other than English. If a translator is needed and the Notice of Hearing does not indicate a translator was arranged, contact the Office of Appeals at once to advise what language is needed so arrangements can be made.

Q: What if I need to change my hearing date?

A: A postponement may be requested if there is a compelling reason why you cannot participate as scheduled. The request can be made in writing before the hearing or on the record during the hearing. A written request can be submitted through CONNECT, by fax, mail, or by email to DEOAppeals.Magistrate@deo.myflorida.com. The Request for Continuance form should be used. If you are unable to use this form, include a statement of good cause for continuance and reference your docket number. The referee will let you know in writing if the request is granted. If a written reply is not received, assume the request was denied. Be available for the hearing and prepared to present your case.

Q: What if I missed the hearing?

A: If you missed a hearing you must exercise due diligence in requesting re-opening. Any request for rehearing must be filed online through your CONNECT account or by mailing, emailing or faxing a written request to the address or fax number on the Notice of Hearing or Decision. To submit by email, attach a statement with your reason for not attending the hearing and send it to RA.AppealsClerks@deo.myflorida.com. The Docket Number for the missed hearing must be included in the statement. An appeals referee decision will only be rescinded if good cause for nonappearance is shown. Only compelling and necessary reasons constitute good cause. If your rehearing request is granted, you must present evidence of good cause at the new hearing and show due diligence in trying to re-arrange your schedule or requesting postponement. If good cause is not shown, the prior decision will be reinstated.

Q: Can I withdraw my appeal?

A: You may withdraw an appeal by mail or fax to the Appeals Office address or fax number on the Notice of Hearing. Include your name and docket number. In most situations, a withdrawn appeal cannot be reopened.

Office of Appeals
P.O. Box 5250
Tallahassee, FL 32399-5250
Fax number: 850-617-6504

Q: Should I hire an attorney?

A: Professional representation is not required, and most people represent themselves at reemployment assistance hearings. You have the right to be represented by an attorney or authorized representative at your own expense. Fees for representing you must be approved by the appeals referee but paid by you. Legal representation may be available through a local Legal Aid Office at reduced or no cost for low-income claimants. For information about hiring an attorney, contact the Florida Bar Association toll-free at 1-800-342-8011. If you hire an attorney or authorize someone to represent you, provide the person's name, address, and telephone number to the Office of Appeals to ensure all notices are sent to that person.

Q: When will I receive a decision?

A: You will receive a decision electronically or in the mail as soon as possible after the hearing. The decision will include findings of fact, conclusions of law, and the result, which will affirm, reverse, or modify the determination or dismiss the appeal. An appeal decision can be viewed in your CONNECT inbox or by selecting the Determination, Pending Issues and Decision Summary page in your CONNECT account.

Q: What if I disagree with the decision?

A: If you disagree with the decision, you can request a review by the RA Appeals Commission. Instructions for requesting review are on the decision document. An online appeal request may be filed with the RA Appeals Commission, [here](http://raaciap.floridajobs.org/). (raaciap.floridajobs.org/). Any request for review must be filed within 20 calendar days after the decision was mailed. The RA Appeals Commission will not hold another hearing; its decision will be based on the testimony and other evidence presented to the referee and how the referee used that evidence to reach a decision. Therefore, presenting all of your evidence at the hearing is very important. Upon completing its review, the RA Appeals Commission will mail a written order to all parties.

Q: Will the case record be confidential?

A: Only final decisions are disclosable along with any exhibits that are offered into evidence and used by the Appeals Referee in rendering their decision.

Fraud and Overpayment

Q: How do I send a repayment to DEO for an overpayment?

A: Repayments are accepted by check/money order with an attached payment coupon or by credit card [here \(https://ucoverpayments.floridajobs.org/Account/CCInfo.aspx\)](https://ucoverpayments.floridajobs.org/Account/CCInfo.aspx). Established overpayments are expected to be paid in full. If you are unable to make repayment in full, you may make payments on a monthly basis. DEO will accept any repayments toward an overpayment.

Q: Why did I get this letter regarding the Treasury Offset Program (TOP)?

A: Eligible debts owed to DEO will be noted within the issued letter and sent to the Department of Treasury in an effort to collect the amount due through your eligible federal tax refund. In addition, a \$17 processing fee is added to the collection. The following are considered eligible debts:

- Delinquent debt as a result of fraud
- Delinquent debt as a result of non-reported earnings
- Legally enforceable debts

Q: I received a collections notice; do I pay it to you or pay it to the collection agency?

A: You should pay the collection agency once any delinquent debts have been referred elsewhere and you have received notification.

Q: Why does the actual overpayment balance differ from what was provided by collections/TOP?

A: If an overpayment requires a third party, either through a collection agency or through the TOP program, they will attach processing fees to the amount due. Any overpayment determined to have been fraudulent by the Department will also incur an additional 15% penalty to the original amount overpaid.

Q: Can I view my overpayments in CONNECT?

A: You are not able to view overpayments in CONNECT. If you have questions regarding an overpayment balance, please contact the department at 1-800-204-2418.

Q: What constitutes fraud related to overpayments?

A: To receive a fraud determination, the Department must conclude that you:

- Made false statements that may alter or increase benefits, OR
- Withheld information that may alter or increase benefits, OR
- Failed to report work in order to obtain or increase benefits, OR
- Failed to report earnings in order to obtain or increase benefits
- Being “unaware” of Reemployment Assistance laws does not exempt you from a fraud determination. Please read all fraud statements carefully when submitting your application and any requests for benefits.

Q: How can I avoid committing fraud?

A:

- Accurately report the reason you are unemployed. After applying for benefits, the separating employer(s) is sent a Notice of Claim Filed and Request for Separation Information, UCB-412.
- Actively search for work. You are required to conduct an active search for work for each week you claim RA benefits. You are required to make a minimum of 5 (or 3 in certain counties) verifiable job contacts each week and submit evidence of your job contacts, when requesting benefit payment in CONNECT. DEO conducts a random audit on claimants' work search records. Employers are contacted to verify the information provided.
- Report any wages you have earned. You must report your gross wages (earnings before taxes and other deductions) for each week you work and claim RA benefits, even if you have not actually been paid for the work. This includes part-time or temporary work. DEO utilizes a quarterly wage cross-match system. The cross-match compares benefits paid to wages reported by employers under the same social security number during the same calendar quarter.
- Report when you are not able or available to seek or accept work. You must be physically able and available to perform some type of work (even if it is not your regular field of work). Notify DEO if you are not ready, willing and able to work (e.g. out of the area, on vacation, sick, suffering total disability) while collecting RA benefits.
- Report all job refusals. If you refuse an offer of work, you must report your refusal to DEO, who will determine if there was good cause to refuse the work.
- Avoid errors and ensure proper payment of benefits. To prevent errors that may result in an overpayment, read all of the information in the Reemployment Assistance Handbook.
- Know your responsibilities and ask for help. Navigating through the RA system can be confusing. Do not risk losing your benefits because you do not know your rights and responsibilities. If you have a question, Reemployment Assistance agents are here to help. Call 1-800-204-2418, Monday through Friday from 8:00 AM until 5:00 PM EST.

Ending Claims

Q: When does a claim end?

A: The claim expires after 365 days. Payments end when the balance runs out OR the end date passes. Your monetary determination will notify you of your maximum balance available as well as the end date of your claim. 12 weeks is the maximum number of weeks of assistance available.

Q: I have returned to work. How do I close/cancel my claim?

A: Congratulations on your new job! You may continue to request benefit weeks up to the week when you started working. When you request the week overlapping with your job, please indicate that you have worked and earned money during the week. If you expect to work full-time and/or earn over \$275 in gross earnings during the week of overlap, you do not need to request benefits for that week.

Q: My claim ran out of money, what do I do now?

A: There are no additional funds available when your claim reaches a \$0 balance. The message on your “Claimant Home” in CONNECT will provide the earliest date you are able to file a new claim for benefits.

You may be able to find additional assistance by dialing 211 on your phone. This will connect you with your local United Way branch.

For other government programs offering assistance, you can visit www.benefits.gov.

Q: Do you have extensions available?

A: There are no extension programs available at this time.

For other government programs offering assistance, you can visit www.benefits.gov.