
Coronavirus-Related Unemployment Insurance
Frequently Asked Questions for Employers

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act expanded unemployment insurance in three key ways:

1. Provides for an extra federal \$600 weekly payment through July 31, 2020, in addition to the weekly benefit amount an eligible employee otherwise receives under state law
2. Increases the maximum number of weeks an individual may receive benefits; these new benefits are funded at the federal level, and are administered by the states
3. Expands coverage to certain workers who traditionally are not eligible for benefits (gig workers and self-employed)

Some employers face challenges keeping or rehiring employees who are receiving enhanced unemployment insurance benefits. The following FAQs are aimed at helping employers understand options to reach a beneficial outcome for all.

Is an employee working reduced hours eligible for any state unemployment benefits?

Yes, if work hours have been reduced, partial benefits could be available up to a maximum of \$247 a week. If an individual's gross wages are *less* than their determined weekly benefit amount (which depends on how much that person earned in 2019) – then the individual may be eligible for between \$10 - \$247 a week.

Can an employee with reduced hours still qualify for the \$600 enhanced federal benefit?

Yes, any partial payment (of at least \$1) qualifies an individual for the added federal \$600 per week.

If an individual's gross wages *exceed* their determined weekly benefit amount, then they are not eligible for state unemployment benefits, or the federal \$600 benefit. However, there is a \$50 "grace" amount of salary that is not counted in this calculation.

Two Examples:

- A. If an employee is eligible for \$247 in state unemployment benefits, they could secure the maximum available to them while still working by collecting:
 - \$245 from job (i.e. \$2 below the \$247 threshold)
 - \$2 state unemployment benefits
 - \$50 "grace" amount from job
 - \$600 federal unemployment
 - **TOTAL = \$897 per week**
- B. If an employee is eligible for \$130 in state unemployment benefits, they could secure the maximum available to them while still working by collecting:
 - \$129 from job (i.e. \$1 below the \$130 threshold)

- \$1 state unemployment benefits
- \$50 “grace” amount from job
- \$600 federal unemployment
- **TOTAL = \$780 per week**

Can employers require that employees who have not been personally impacted by the coronavirus return to work?

Employers who let go of employees are asked by the Louisiana Workforce Commission to fill out a separation notice ([Form 77](#)), which asks an employer the reason for the employee’s departure (i.e. voluntary, lack of work, other). If an employee had been offered a job, but turned it down, this could impact the employee’s unemployment benefits.

For more information on the enhanced unemployment benefits, please see additional FAQs from the [Louisiana Workforce Commission website](#).