

Unemployment Insurance & the Federal Government Shutdown

Frequently Asked Questions (revised 1/17/2019)

If you have been furloughed as a direct result of the federal shutdown, you may be eligible for unemployment benefits.

Q: How do I file for Unemployment Benefits?

A: The best way to file a claim is online at www.ui4u.mt.gov. You can call us at (406) 444-2545 to file your claim but due to call volumes, access is limited.

Q: When should I file my claim?

A: As soon as possible. Unemployment claims are not backdated.

Q: If I am working without pay, am I eligible for unemployment?

A: No. Unemployment only applies to people who are not working or who are working less than their typical hours.

Q: Right after I filed my claim, I received notice saying I am monetarily ineligible. What does this mean?

A: When a federal claim is filed, we must ask your federal employer for your wage records. Until that information comes in, we must send an Initial Monetary Determination showing your status as monetarily ineligible. When the federal wage report is received, a Revised Monetary Determination is sent showing your eligibility and the amount of your weekly benefit.

Q: I filed a claim in December but when I log in to my UI4U account, it shows I am monetarily ineligible and tells me to file a new claim. What should I do?

A: Do not file a new claim; just keep checking UI4U on your existing claim. Until your federal wage report is received, UI4U only shows View Claim Information and File New Claim options. After we get the federal wages, the File Request for Payment option will be displayed.

Q: If I file a claim on the internet, is there anything special I need to know?

A: Yes. When asked why you are not working, select "Laid Off", then select "Furlough" as the reason for layoff. When asked if you are "Job-Attached", answer "Yes."

Q: Do I have to look for another job if I get unemployment?

A: No. If you will be recalled to your federal job after the shutdown, you are not required to look for other work. The work search requirement is waived because you are considered "job-attached."

Q: When will I get my first shutdown-related unemployment benefit payment?

A: The first week of a newly filed claim is a "waiting week", and it is unpaid. The following week, if you are still furloughed and you file for weekly payment for that week (Sunday through midnight Saturday), you would receive a benefit payment for that week.

Q: How do I know if I'm eligible for unemployment?

A: There are two parts to eligibility - you earned enough wages to be monetarily eligible, and you left work for an allowable reason. A furlough or shutdown is an allowable reason. Montana does not have federal wage records so we must ask your employer for those. We will also send you a form to fill out. Complete the form and return it with a copy of your SF-50 or pay stubs.

Q: Can I work part time and receive benefits?

A: It depends. If you are working reduced hours for your federal employer or working part-time for a different employer during the shutdown, you may be eligible for partial benefits. However, you must report all hours worked and earnings the week you worked, regardless of when you're paid.

Q: If I receive backpay for the shutdown, do I have to repay my benefits?

A: Yes. When you finally get paid, notify us of your backpay and arrange to repay the benefits. We call that an overpayment.

Q: I am not a federal employee. I work for a federal contractor affected by the federal shutdown. Can I file for unemployment benefits?

A: Yes. Anyone can file for unemployment benefits if they are not working or are working reduced hours. Whether you are eligible for unemployment will depend on why you are not working.

Q: I filed for unemployment and now I think I don't want or need a claim. What should I do?

A: Within 10 days of filing, you can cancel the claim by mailing or faxing us a written, signed request. Our mailing address is Montana Department of Labor & Industry, Unemployment Insurance Division, P.O. Box 8020, Helena, MT 59604. Our fax number is (406) 444-2699.

Q: I reactivated a claim filed before the federal shutdown, and now I don't need it. What do I do?

A: Stop requesting payments and your claim will go inactive again.

Q: What if this shutdown lasts for a long time?

A: We will update the FAQs if something changes. Keep checking for the latest updates at MontanaWorks.gov.