

BEACON ONE-STOP APPLICATION

Frequently Asked Questions

The Maryland Department of Labor (Labor) launched BEACON One-Stop for online claims filing on Friday, April 24, 2020. BEACON One-Stop allows claimants to file claims for ALL unemployment insurance (UI) benefit programs through a single application, including the most recent federally-enacted unemployment programs, Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC).

Due to technical issues surrounding the website, and in efforts to provide the best user experience, the Division of Unemployment Insurance will be taking the application down nightly between the hours of 1:00 a.m. to 3:00 a.m. to perform maintenance and resolve any ongoing technical issues. While the website will be unavailable to customers during those early morning hours, this time was selected to impact the fewest number of claimants possible.

In order to prevent the overload of the system that users have experienced, we have introduced a virtual waiting line. By entering this system, you will be able to see how many individuals are waiting for site access, receive an estimated wait time that is constantly updated, and sign-up to receive an email when the system is ready for you to access the platform. This will provide more certainty about when you will receive assistance, but, more importantly, it will help ensure the capacity problems the platform experienced in the past do not reoccur.

We are also implementing a new gating system to increase the number of customers who are able to complete their filings with minimal hassle and frustration:

On Sundays and Mondays, ONLY our customers who are filing weekly claim certifications will be able to file, in order to ensure that Marylanders can receive their payments timely and when needed. If you are unable to file your weekly claim certification on Sunday or Monday, you are not restricted from filing it on any other day.

On Tuesdays through Saturdays, our customers can file new claims as well as complete all other activities, including filing claim certifications.

1. How is the BEACON One-Stop Application different from the current application?

This new application process makes the filing process more user friendly and efficient. Claimants can use the application to file ALL claims for regular UI benefit programs, including those who were previously required to file their claim by phone. Individuals will be able to use this application to file for:

- Regular Unemployment Insurance Benefits, including for claimants who:
 - earned wages in multiple states
 - had more than 3 employers over the last 18 month
- Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE)
- Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Service members (UCX)
- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) for those who are:
 - self-employed;
 - sole-proprietors;
 - independent contractors;
 - gig workers; and,
 - lacking sufficient work history to be eligible for regular unemployment insurance benefits.
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)
 - those who have exhausted their benefits since July 1, 2019

The BEACON One-Stop application will:

- guide the claimant through the application process and present a dynamic set of questions based on the claimant's individual circumstances, input, and responses;
- intelligently review a claimant's situation and determine if they meet the requirements of an alternative unemployment insurance program;
- provide claimants with a single location to receive up-to-date information about their claim and benefit payments;
- allow the claimant to upload required supporting documents, forms or other information;
- collect the claimant's preferred payment method and choice of tax withholding; and,
- allow the claimant to track their steps in the claim process

When you login to the BEACON One-Stop application, you will be in your user portal. In your user portal you are able to receive notices and alerts about your account, including notifications regarding any missing documentation. Additionally, you will be able to select your preferred method of communication: e-mail, text message, or postal mail. All communications will be available in your portal immediately, which will cut down on wait times for you to receive updates about your claim.

2. Why did the Division of Unemployment Insurance make such a major upgrade now?

In order to implement the federal CARES Act programs in a timely manner, we recently partnered with an outside vendor (Sagitec) to create BEACON One-Stop. If we had attempted to update our older system to accept applications for the CARES Act, it would have taken weeks, if not months. This was not an option. We want to make sure that all eligible Marylanders receive the benefits they need and deserve as soon as possible.

3. What documents or information do I need in order to apply for UI benefits using the BEACON One-Stop application?

Please make sure you have the following documents or information available before beginning your application:

- Your Social Security Number
- Alien Registration number (if you are not a citizen)
- Employer Information: Business/Company name, complete payroll address, telephone number, first day of work, last day of work, and reason for separation for each employer you worked for in the last 18 months
- If you were in the military within the last 18 months, your DD214 - Member 4 document
- If you are a former Federal Government Employee Form 50 or SF-8, if available
- Name, Date of Birth, and Social Security number for each dependent

NOTE: A dependent is defined as a son, daughter, stepchild or legally adopted child under the age of 16 whom you support. At the time you file your initial claim, only one parent may claim a dependent(s), up to a maximum of five (5), during any one-year benefit period.

Employment History for the Last 18 Months:

- Name, Address and Telephone Number of all employers (i.e., Business/Company name, complete payroll address)
- Employment Start and End Date, Return-to-Work Date
- Reason for separation from each employer you worked for in the past 18 months
- Union name and local number (if you are a union member)
- DD214 - Member 4 Document (if you were in the military)
- Former Military Status, if applicable: If you were in the military within the past 18 months, your Form 50 or SF-8 (if you were a federal employee)

Income and Self-employment Documentation that may be needed:

- Pay Stubs
- Form W-2

- Form 1099
- Income Tax K-1 Schedule
- Summary of Quarterly Reports
- Accounts Receivable Statement
- Profit and Loss Statement
- Business Formation papers
- Independent Contractor Agreement
- Tax Return - Schedule C

4. I am self-employed, an independent contractor, or a gig worker. What documentation do I need to apply for UI benefits?

If you are self-employed, an independent contractor or a gig worker you may be eligible to receive UI benefits under the PUA program. Acceptable documentation for proof of employment or self-employment can include, but is not limited to:

- Business Registration or Charter
- Business Formation Papers
- Independent Contractor Agreement
- Summary of Quarterly Payments
- Profit and Loss Statement
- Accounts Receivable Statement
- Evidence of your 2019 Income (e.g. 1099, Schedule K-1 , Schedule C)

5. Am I eligible for any of the new unemployment benefits offered in response to the national health emergency?

You may be eligible for UI benefits through the new CARES Act benefit programs:

- Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)- Individuals who are not eligible for regular benefits and cannot work due to COVID-19 related reasons may now be eligible to receive UI benefits.
- Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)- Eligible claimants may receive 13 weeks of UI benefits on top of current or previously exhausted benefits.
- Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC)- Eligible claimants may receive \$600 in addition to their determined weekly benefit amount.

The only way to determine your eligibility is to apply. Claimants are strongly encouraged to file claims online through the [BEACON One-Stop Application](#). However, you may file by phone by calling (410) 949-0022. If you have difficulty operating a standard phone, please use Maryland Relay by dialing 711.

6. How long can I receive benefits under these programs?

The different UI programs have different durations:

- You can be eligible for UI benefits under PUA beginning January 27, 2020 through December 31, 2020.
- You can receive PEUC benefits from March 29, 2020 through December 31, 2020.
- You can receive FPUC benefits from March 29, 2020 through July 31, 2020 (last payment in week ending Saturday, July 25, 2020).

All benefits will be applied retroactively to your earliest date of eligibility within the program range.

7. I received a notice that I may be eligible for PUA/PEUC. What do I need to do to apply?

If you have received a notice that you may be eligible for these additional benefits, you will need to complete and submit the BEACON One-Stop application. Please visit MDunemployment.com and select “Apply for Unemployment Insurance Benefits,” which will take you to the BEACON One-Stop Application. Follow the instructions to activate your account and login to begin your application.

8. I recently exhausted my regular UI benefits. Can I get an extension? What do I need to do to get an extension?

If you have recently exhausted your UI benefits on or after July 1, 2019, you may be eligible for PEUC benefits. If you meet the eligibility requirements you can receive 13 additional weeks of UI benefits. Please visit MDunemployment.com and select “Apply for Unemployment Insurance Benefits,” which will take you to the BEACON One-Stop Application. Follow the instructions to activate your account and login to begin your PEUC application.

9. How do I provide the Division with additional documentation that may be needed to determine my eligibility? Can I take a picture with my phone?

There are several ways to provide Labor with additional documentation. ALL documents, including photos, must be legible. Illegible documents will be rejected possibly delaying the determination of eligibility. You can provide the documents by uploading them in the BEACON One-Stop Application. If you use your smartphone to take photos of your documents, please ensure that the information is clear and readable.

10. What documentation do I need to provide to show COVID-19 is the reason I cannot work?

Examples of acceptable documentation to show that COVID-19 is the reason that you cannot

work include:

- Documentation from medical personnel showing that you or someone in your household was diagnosed with or sought treatment for COVID-19;
- A letter from your employer indicating that you had a firm start date, but cannot work due to COVID-19;
- Notification that shows a travel restriction preventing you from going to work;
- Correspondence from your employer stating that COVID-19 caused them to close; and,
- Correspondence from your child's school or childcare facility that COVID-19 caused them to close.

11. What if I cannot return any requested forms by the deadline on the notice/correspondence?

Due to the unprecedented high volume of claims resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, Labor has temporarily removed ALL deadlines for claimants to provide additional information or deliver supporting documentation. Your claim will NOT be negatively impacted by your inability to meet any deadline date printed on a correspondence that you receive.

12. How can I apply for the federally extended benefits?

Starting April 24, 2020, you will be able to apply for UI benefits online using the BEACON One-Stop application by visiting MDunemployment.com and selecting the link "Apply for Unemployment Insurance Benefits"

13. How much money am I eligible to receive, if I qualify for PUA or PEUC?

If you meet the eligibility requirements for PUA or PEUC, the Division will calculate your Weekly Benefit Amount (WBA) based on the income that you earned in the past. PUA and PEUC will generally replace approximately 50% of your previous income. If you are eligible for either program, you will also automatically receive an additional \$600 per week for the weeks ending Saturday, April 4th to Saturday, July 25th.

14. Once I file my claim for PUA/PEUC benefits, what happens next?

The Division will review your application. If additional information or documentation is necessary, the Division will request it from you. You will receive notice of the request through your preferred method of contact (e-mail, text message, or postal mail). Your BEACON One-Stop portal will also contain the notice. Once the Division is able to completely adjudicate your claim, we will notify you through your preferred method and your portal.

15. What are the minimal computer system requirements for using the application?

To access BEACON One-Stop, please use a computer (laptop or desktop) with:

- Windows 7 or higher operating system. OS X, the Apple operating system, is not supported and is currently being tested. BEACON is currently not compatible with Apple devices. If you have a Microsoft Windows computer, please use it to access BEACON. A change is being made in BEACON to support Apple devices. This change is expected to be in place within the next 24-48 hours. Please check BEACON One-Stop for updates.
- Browser:
 - Google Chrome version 80 and 81
 - Internet Explorer 11
 - Microsoft Edge
 - Firefox version 74 and 75
 - NOT SUPPORTED: Apple Safari is currently being tested
- BEACON One-Stop has not been optimized for use on small screens, such as tablets and smartphones. You may have difficulty navigating through the One-Stop if you use a device with a screen smaller than 10” inches (measured diagonally).

16. I filed a claim in the old system (NetClaims/WebCert/TeleCert). Do I need to file a new claim in BEACON One-Stop? Is there a way to bring my information over?

If you filed a claim for unemployment insurance benefits prior to April 24, 2020, you will need to activate your new BEACON account. When you activate your account, all of your claimant account information will be available in the new application. To activate your account, you will need to verify your identity with your social security number and PIN. If you cannot remember your PIN, you will be able to authenticate your identity with other information. If you have any questions or issues with the application, please contact a Claim Center at (410) 949-0022.

Once you have completed the account activation process, you will be able to access your claimant portal, which will have all of the details and information about your UI account in one place. **Instructions with screenshots on how to Activate your Account (hyperlink).**

17. I received an email from BEACON One-Stop that is supposed to have a link, but there is no link in the email, just regular text. How do I follow the link?

The Division may send an email to you with an embedded link to BEACON One-Stop. Some email servers protect end users from “phishing” attacks and other malicious behavior by converting embedded links to secure links. If you receive an email from BEACON One-Stop and the embedded link is displayed only as text, please activate the links using the instructions given by your email provider.

18. I tried to logon to BEACON One-Stop, but I received an error in my browser. What should I do?

If you are receiving an error in your browser (such as a 404 – File or directory not found), please try closing using browser and retrying BEACON One-Stop, or try another supported browser.

19. Technical Support

If you need assistance, please contact BEACON.support@Maryland.gov.