



Maryland Unemployment Insurance

What You Should Know



Unemployment Insurance Facts



Unemployment Insurance (UI) began nationwide in the United States on August 14, 1935, when President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Social Security Act.

- In Maryland, the UI program is administered by the Maryland Department of Labor.
- Employers pay into the Maryland Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, which is used solely to pay benefits to the unemployed.

The UI program aims to:

- pay temporary benefits to displaced employees who are unemployed through no fault of their own and are seeking work, and
- help workers find suitable jobs through American Job Centers and other Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) partners.

BEACON UI System

BEACON is the Maryland Division of Unemployment Insurance (Division) online UI system.

- Claimants, employers, and third-party agents can log into their BEACON portals to access information and perform several UI tasks online, 24/7.

BEACON Claimant Portal: beacon.labor.maryland.gov/

BEACON Employer Portal: employer.beacon.labor.md.gov/

BEACON Third-Party Agent Portal: agent.beacon.labor.md.gov/

For more information about BEACON, see:

- BEACON System Overview:
labor.maryland.gov/employment/uibeaconoverview.shtml
- Claimant Tutorial Videos:
labor.maryland.gov/employment/uibeaconvideo.shtml
- Employer and Third-Party Agent Tutorial Videos:
labor.maryland.gov/employment/uitaxapps.shtml#empvideos

UI Information for Employers



Employer UI Obligations

Covered employment: An individual must have earned sufficient wages in covered employment during the base period (see slides 10 and 11 for details) to be eligible for UI benefits. When an individual performs work for an employer in return for wages, the individual is likely covered for UI purposes.

For exemptions, see the **Employers' UI Contributions Information and Definitions web page** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/empfaq.shtml).

Contributory employer: A contributory employer pays quarterly UI taxes based on the employer's benefit charges and the taxable wages the employer reported to the Division.

For more, see **Unemployment Insurance Tax Rates** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/uitrustfundpoints.shtml).

Reimbursable employer: Certain non-profit organizations and government entities may opt to reimburse the state for benefits charged to their accounts (instead of paying UI taxes).

For more, see **Employers' UI Contributions Information and Definitions** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/empfaq.shtml).

NOTE: It is illegal for an employer to require an employee to repay, pay into, or waive any UI benefit rights.

Employer Requirements

- **UI Account Registration** - Employers are required to register for a Maryland UI account:
 - in BEACON (employer.beacon.labor.md.gov); or,
 - by filing a Combined Registration Application (interactive.marylandtaxes.gov/webapps/comptrollercra/).
- **Quarterly Reports and UI Taxes** - Each quarter, employers are required to:
 - report the total gross wages paid on the Quarterly Contribution Report; and,
 - contributory employers must pay UI taxes and reimbursable employers must reimburse the Division for benefits paid.
- **Mass Layoff** - Employers experiencing a mass layoff (affecting 25+ workers) are required to submit a list of impacted workers to the Division at least 48 hours in advance.
Employers can report a mass layoff in [BEACON](#).

Employers covered by the WARN Act must provide at least 60 days' notice of a mass layoff or plant closure (dol.gov/general/topic/termination/plantclosings).

Report a dislocation event at labor.maryland.gov/employment/disworkerreport.shtml or call the **Maryland Dislocation Services Unit at 410-767-2833**.

See labor.maryland.gov/employment/new-employers.shtml for more about employer requirements.

Employer Requirements

- **Request for Separation Information** - When a former employee files a claim for UI, the Division will request information from the employer (by sending a Request for Separation Information form). Employers can respond to the form in:
 - [BEACON](#);
 - **State Information Data Exchange System (SIDES)**; (labor.maryland.gov/employment/uicides.shtml); or via,
 - Mail (to the address appearing on the form).
 - **Eligibility Issues** - If there is a question about a former employee's eligibility for UI benefits, an employer should provide relevant information, when requested.
 - **Required Posters** - Employers must display two posters (about UI benefits and health insurance coverage) in a highly visible area of the workplace. Posters are provided when the UI account is established and are available online at labor.maryland.gov/oeope/poster.shtml.
 - **Report Hires/Job Refusals** - Employers are required to report new hires and rehires in the **Maryland New Hire Registry** (mdnewhire.com/#/public/public-landing/login).
- Employers should also inform the Division in [BEACON](#) when a claimant refuses an offer of suitable work or refuses to return to work.

Work Sharing Layoff Aversion Program

Work Sharing (also called Short-Time Compensation) allows employers to temporarily reduce employees' hours (as opposed to laying off staff) faced during a short-term decline in business. The impacted employees receive partial UI benefits.

To participate, an employer must:

- Have at least two employees per affected unit;
- Reduce a participating employee's hours by **at least 10%**, and **no more than 60%**;
- Be current with UI tax (contribution) payments.

Employer benefits include:

- Retain experienced employees, keep employee morale high, and maintain productivity;
- Maintain stable staffing levels to allow business to return to normal operations when economic conditions improve. Save the expense and time of recruiting, hiring, and training new employees.

Only employers can establish a Work Sharing plan. To apply:

- complete the Work Sharing application (labor.maryland.gov/forms/uiwsapplication.pdf) and participant list (labor.maryland.gov/forms/uiwsparticipantlist.xlsx); and,
- Submit both documents to ui.worksharing@maryland.gov 7-15 calendar days before your anticipated Work Sharing start date.

For more, visit labor.maryland.gov/employment/worksharing/.

UI Information for Claimants



Eligibility for UI Benefits

To qualify for UI, an individual must:

- be unemployed through no fault of their own,
- be able to work and available for work without restrictions.

- be monetarily eligible,

To be monetarily eligible, an individual must have earned sufficient wages in the standard or alternate base period.

- **Standard Base Period** - first four of the last five completed calendar quarters (prior to the claim effective date). See slide 11 for more about the effective date.

Month Claim is Filed	Your Standard Base Period is a 12-month Period Ending on the Prior:
January, February or March	September 30
April, May or June	December 31
July, August or September	March 31

Eligibility for UI Benefits, contd.

NOTE: The claim effective date is the Sunday of the week in which the initial claim is filed. For example, if a claim is filed on Wednesday, March 4, the claim effective date is Sunday, March 1.

- **Alternate Base Period** - four most-recently completed calendar quarters (prior to the claim effective date).

Month Claim is Filed	Your Alternate Base Period is a 12-month Period Ending the Prior:
January, February or March	December 31
April, May or June	March 31
July, August or September	June 30

See the **Eligibility Requirements FAQs** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/claimfaq.shtml) to learn more.

Applying for UI Benefits

To begin the UI process, individuals should apply for UI benefits (also called filing an initial claim). **File an initial claim** either:

- Online in **BEACON**:
(beacon.labor.maryland.gov/beacon/claimant-page.html), or
- By calling a claims agent: **(667) 207-6520**

After a claimant applies, the Division will send a **Statement of Wages and Monetary Determination** to inform the claimant whether or not they are eligible for UI benefits.

For more about filing an initial claim, see:

- **Claims Filing - Initial Claims FAQs**
(labor.maryland.gov/employment/claimfaq.shtml)
- **BEACON Account Registration tutorial video**
(labor.maryland.gov/employment/uibeaconvideo.shtml)
- **List of Information and Documents Needed for Claims Filing**
(labor.maryland.gov/employment/uicclaimdocs.pdf)

Claimant Requirements

To remain eligible for UI benefits, a claimant must:

1. **Be able and available for work without restrictions.**
2. **Actively search for work each week.**
See slide 15 for details.
3. **File timely weekly claim certifications to request UI benefit payments.**
4. **Report all payments received/that the claimant knows they will receive.**
See slide 14 for details.
5. **Be available and/or contact the Division and/or the Maryland Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) when instructed.**
6. **Accept offers of suitable work.**

See the **Eligibility Requirements FAQs** labor.maryland.gov/employment/claimfaq.shtml to learn more.

Claimant Requirements

Reporting Earnings and Payments

You must report all payments that you received or expect to receive (vacation, holiday, bonus, special payments, severance, pensions, back pay/damages and etc.) when you file an initial claim.

If you learn of these payments after filing an initial claim, call a claims agent (except for pension payments. See the section below for details).

See **Claims Filing - Initial Claims FAQs** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/claimfaq.shtml) for more.

When you file a weekly claim certification, you must report:

- gross earnings for any work you performed (paid training, part-time, temporary, self-employment, odd jobs, tips, etc.); and,
- the first payment from a pension you did not previously report or changes to your pension amount. For more, see the **Claims Filing - Weekly Claim Certifications FAQs** labor.maryland.gov/employment/claimfaq.shtml.

NOTE: Wages must be reported in the week the money is earned, not the week it is actually paid. **Commission payments are reported in the week that they are paid to you.**

If you earn **more than your weekly benefit amount (WBA)** in a week, you are not considered unemployed and your claim will be closed. If you: become unemployed again or earn less than your WBA (and you have benefits remaining on your claim); you may **reopen your claim** (select the Reopen Claim action item in BEACON or call a claims agent).

Claimant Work Search Requirements

To fulfill the work search requirements, a claimant must:

1. **Register with the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE)** (online at mwejobs.maryland.gov or at a local American Job Center (labor.maryland.gov/county)).

A claimant must also:

- upload or create a résumé in MWE;
- make the résumé viewable to employers in MWE; and,
- maintain an up-to-date résumé in MWE while collecting UI benefits.

2. **Complete at least three valid reemployment activities each week, which must include at least one job contact** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/uiaswreq.shtm).
3. Maintain a detailed weekly record of completed job contact(s) and reemployment activities. Submitting the contact(s) and activities in the MWE Job Contact and Reemployment Activity Log is the easiest way for a claimant to do this.

To learn more, see labor.maryland.gov/employment/uirex.shtml.

Claimant Benefit Payments

- The weekly benefit amount (WBA) is the amount of benefit payments a claimant may be entitled to each week. The Division will calculate a WBA for each eligible claimant (based on the wages the claimant earned in the base period).
- The **WBA in Maryland** ranges from **\$50 (minimum)** to **\$430 (maximum)**. A claimant will choose whether to receive these payments by direct deposit or check when the claimant files an initial claim.
- A claimant may receive more or less than the WBA during a benefit week, depending on certain factors. For example, if a claimant worked while collecting UI benefits, the claimant may receive less than the WBA in a benefit week.
- Claimants may receive **up to 26 weeks** of Regular UI benefits.
- Eligible claimants may receive a **dependent's allowance of \$8 per child** (up to a maximum of five dependents). Even with dependents' allowance, the claimant's WBA will not exceed \$430 (maximum).
- UI benefits are subject to federal and state taxes. A claimant may choose to have **federal tax (10%)**, **Maryland state tax (7%)**, both, or no taxes withheld from the claimant's UI benefits.

UI Information for Claimants and Employers



Appeals

Claimants - If a claimant receives a determination disqualifying the claimant from UI benefits, the claimant may file an appeal. The determination will include information about filing.

Employers - Employers can appeal a liability determination, a benefit charge, or a tax rate assignment within 15 days of the decision. If the decision is appealable, employers will receive information that includes instructions for filing an appeal.

Third-party agents may also file appeals on behalf of their clients.

File an Appeal - Claimants, employers, and agents may file in BEACON. Those who do not have BEACON access can email UILowerAppeals.Labor@maryland.gov for instructions.

Appeal Hearings - Those notified about an appeal hearing should make every effort to be available. Hearings are the last step at which a claimant or employer may present evidence.

Appeal Process - The Lower Appeals Division will hear any initial determination appeals. If an individual disagrees with a decision from the Lower Appeals Division, the individual may file an appeal with the Board of Appeals.

For more, see the **Lower Appeals** (labor.maryland.gov/uiappeals/aplower.shtml) or **Board of Appeals** web pages (labor.maryland.gov/uiappeals/apboard.shtml).

Fraud Information

It is considered UI fraud if an individual knowingly makes false statements, misrepresents, or fails to give important facts to obtain or increase UI benefits.

- A claimant who makes a mistake when filing an initial claim or claim certification should immediately call a claims agent at **667-207-6520**.

To report suspected UI fraud, call **1-800-492-6804** or submit a **Request for Investigation of Unemployment Insurance Fraud** form (labor.maryland.gov/forms/uifraudtipform.pdf) via:

- Email: ui.fraud@maryland.gov; or,
- Mail: **Attn: Benefit Payment Control, 100 South Charles Street, Tower 1, Baltimore, MD 21201.**

For more, see **Audits, Overpayments and Fraud FAQs** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/uibpsfaq.html).



Video Courtesy of [DOL](https://www.dol.gov)

Fraud Penalties

If the Division determines that a **claimant committed UI fraud**, the claimant:

- will be disqualified from receiving UI benefits for one year; and,
- must repay all benefits acquired by fraud, plus a 15 percent penalty and a monthly 1.5 percent monthly interest payment.

In addition, the claimant may be subject to:

- a \$1,000 fine; and/or,
- imprisonment.

See **Overpayments and Fraud FAQs** at labor.maryland.gov/employment/uibpcfags.shtml to learn more.



Claimant and Employer Resources

Claims Agent: 667-207-6520. File a new claim or inquire about an existing claim. For hours, see labor.maryland.gov/employment/officenum.shtml.

Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phone system: File claim certification, reset PIN, or check payment status, 24/7.

- Baltimore area or out of state: **410-949-0022**
- MD, outside of Baltimore area: **800-827-4839**

Employer Call Center: 410-949-0033. Inquire about UI taxes, benefit charges, etc. For hours, see labor.maryland.gov/employment/contributions.shtml.

Communication Assistance: If you have a disability which makes it difficult for you to communicate by phone, see the **Accommodation Information and Resources web page** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/uiaccessibility.shtml).

For more about UI, see:

- **Unemployment Insurance in Maryland A Guide to Reemployment (Claimant Guide)** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/clmtguide/uiclmtmpamphlet.pdf)
- **Employers' Quick Reference Guide** (labor.maryland.gov/employment/empguide/empguide.pdf)

Thank You!

