How to File a UI Claim

A claim for Unemployment Insurance may be filed in person at any Department of Workforce Services office, online through the ***EZARC*** system **http://*www.ezarc.adws.arkansas.gov***, or on forms for filing claims by mail. Certain conditions must be met during each week for which benefits are payable.

To be eligible, you must be:
A. Unemployed or significantly reduced hours,
B. Physically and mentally able to perform suitable work,
C. Available for suitable work,
D. Making a reasonable effort to find work,
E. Free of participation or direct interest in a labor dispute, and
F. Free of disqualifications

In addition to the above, a waiting period of one (1) week must be served before benefits are payable to you. A week to be used as a valid waiting period must be a valid week of unemployment. A valid week of unemployment must be a week you have claimed after filing your Initial Claim, in which you did not have any earnings or had earnings of less than 140% of your Weekly Benefit Amount, met all Eligibility Requirements, and a week for which you are not disqualified.

ABLE TO WORK means being physically and mentally able to perform work similar to work you performed in the past or other work for which you are fitted by experience and training to perform and have a reasonable expectancy of obtaining.

AVAILABILITY FOR WORK means being ready to accept work at once, and there are not circumstances, personal or otherwise, which would prevent you from accepting suitable work.

REASONABLE EFFORT TO FIND WORK means making personal efforts to secure suitable work by contacting persons with hiring authority, union local, etc., or doing those things reasonable for you to do in regard to your occupation which would result in your finding employment as soon as possible.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is Unemployment Insurance tax deducted from my paycheck?
No, deductions are not made from your paycheck. Arkansas employers who are covered by Department of Workforce Services law are required to a pay a quarterly tax on their payroll. This tax funds your benefits.

Do I ever get paid for the Valid Waiting Period Week?
No, the law requires that each individual serve a Valid Waiting Period for the first eligible week claimed. Although you do not get paid for this week, the maximum benefit amount is not reduced or affected.

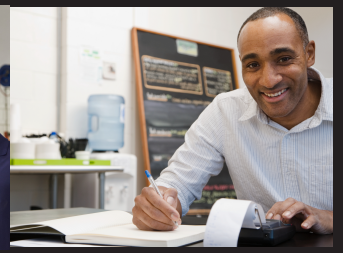
Do I have to serve another waiting period if I reopen my claim?
No, only one Valid Waiting Period is required for the life of a claim. However, once a claim expires and another new claim is filed, another waiting period must be served.

If I find a part-time job while I am drawing unemployment insurance, do I have to report the wages I make each week?
Yes, you must report the number of hours worked and the gross wages for every week you work and claim, no matter where you are employed.

Do I report gross (amount before any deductions) or net earnings when I am claiming weekly benefits?
You must report the number of hours you work and the gross wages earned for each week claimed. Earnings must be reported for the week in which they are earned - not the week in which you get paid.

I get paid on production work and I don't know how much my gross wages are going to be until I get my paycheck. How can I claim the week correctly if I don't know how much my paycheck is going to be?
If you are not sure what your pay will be for a week, you must wait until you actually get paid to claim that week. DWS Regulation 14(a) provides that, in the case of partial unemployment, an individual has 14 days from the date the wages are paid to claim the week.

Can I change my mind on having federal taxes withheld once I make my decision?
Yes. After you have made your original decision on your federal tax withholding status, you may change your decision one time during your benefit year. Contact your local office if you wish to make this change.



What if I don't agree with the decision DWS makes concerning my eligibility for unemployment benefits?
Either interested party (claimant or employer) who disagrees with a decision issued by DWS may file an appeal. The Appeal Tribunal is a separate entity that will hear your case and render a new decision. The next level of appeals is the Board of Review, followed by the Arkansas Court of Appeals.

Do I have to take a job that pays less than what I made on my last job?
Individuals who are required to look for work must be willing to accept suitable work when offered. Suitability of a job can depend on many factors - such as how much the new job pays, how long you have been unemployed, and what you were paid on your last job. The law does not specify that the pay must be the same as last employment.

Can I go to school while I draw my unemployment benefits?
Arkansas Law requires that a person be able and available for work while drawing unemployment, and be willing to accept suitable work if offered. However, exemptions from work search can occur if you are attending school full-time and are enrolled in a training course that is approved by the Department Director; or if you are attending school full-time in an approved Federal program such as the Trade Act. Check with your local office to determine if you qualify for any type of exemption.

If you do not qualify for work search exemption, you may still be eligible for benefits while attending school. There are several factors considered when determining if school attendance will affect a person's eligibility for Unemployment Insurance Benefits. The most important factor is availability for work. In other words, your schooling must not interfere with making your minimum number of assigned job contacts or your ability to accept work.

What happens when my benefits run out?

If you have not become re-employed by the time your unemployment insurance is exhausted (drawn out), contact your local office to determine if or when you might qualify for additional benefits. You may qualify for another regular claim for benefits or extended benefits, if we are in an extended benefits period.

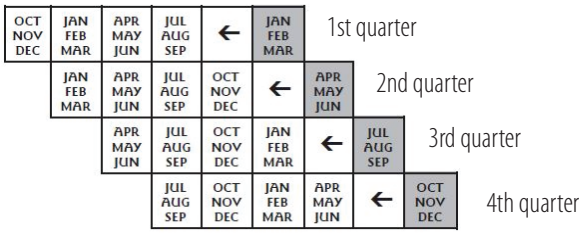
Even if you are not able to establish a new claim, please continue to visit your local DWS office so they can assist you as much as possible in your search for new employment.

How can I calculate my base period?

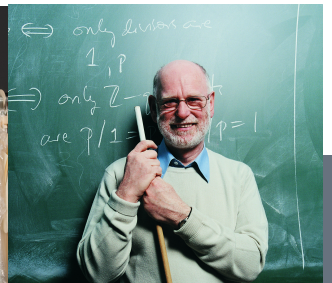
Your benefit amount is determined by how much you worked and earned during the 12-month period of time called the "Base Period." A Base Period is defined as the first 4 of the last 5 completed calendar quarters. There are 4 quarters in a calendar year:

The 1st quarter is January, February and March
The 2nd quarter is April, May and June
The 3rd quarter is July, August and September
The 4th quarter is October, November and December

To calculate your base period first determine the quarter in which you filed your initial claim.



Your new claim's benefit amount will be based on where you worked during this 12-month period.



Do I have to pay Federal and State Income Tax on my Unemployment Benefits?

Yes, Unemployment Benefits are subject to Federal Income Taxes. DWS offers claimants the option of having 10% of your weekly benefit amount deducted for payment of Federal Income Taxes.

Beginning in 2018, Unemployment Benefit payments must also be reported on your Arkansas state income tax return.

I think I am going to be laid off next month; can I find out now how much I will draw in Unemployment Benefits?

No, that information is not available until you actually complete an initial claim application. The information you enter is matched against our files according to your social security number. The data is processed to determine whether or not you qualify for benefits in Arkansas and how much you will be able to draw. We will then mail to you a Notice of Monetary Determination, which will tell you whether you have enough wage credits to establish a claim.

How long after I complete my claim form do I have to wait to start claiming weekly benefits?

To allow time for processing your new claim for benefits, it is a good idea to wait at least three (3) days after Saturday midnight of the week in which you submitted your online claim form before trying to claim that first week.

Subsequent weeks can be claimed as soon as each week has ended

When can I expect to start receiving unemployment benefits?

Remember that the first week claimed after establishing a new claim serves as a Valid Waiting Period, (provided you are otherwise eligible) and no benefits are paid for that week. The earliest payment of benefits begins with the second week claimed. However, payment of benefits can vary depending on your individual circumstances and whether there are any barriers or issues that have to be resolved. For more detailed instructions consult the UI Information Handbook available under UI forms on our web page.

https://www.dws.arkansas.gov/

Please contact your nearest DWS Local Office if you need interpretation or translation services to complete your Unemployment Insurance claim. DWS provides interpretation and translation services to Limited English Proficient clients at no cost.

americanjobcenter

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Little Rock, AR 72201
501-682-2121

Arkansas Unemployment Insurance

adws
Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Information Needed to File an Unemployment Insurance Claim

What information is required to file an Unemployment Insurance Claim?

- Your Social Security Number
- Your picture ID
- Your mailing and physical address
- Your telephone number
- Your last employer's name and address
- The name and number of your labor union if you find work through a union
- Your Alien Identification Number, residence card, work permit, or registration information if you are not a US Citizen
- Your banking information if you wish to receive UI payments by Direct Deposit

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