

Many individuals have reached out to the Commission with questions about the impact of COVID-19 on reemployment assistance benefits in Florida. While the federal and state law pertaining to unemployment benefits is still evolving as part of the pandemic response, the following information highlights the legal developments to date.



The Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO) has prepared responses to frequently asked questions from claimants and employers, which can be found here: [Reemployment Assistance COVID-19 & CARES Act Frequently Asked Questions](#). This guidance incorporates questions related to the following:

- Eligibility for reemployment assistance benefits for unemployment caused by COVID-19
- Florida's temporary waiver of work registration requirements
- Florida's temporary waiver of work search requirements
- Eligibility for CARES Act benefits including Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (PUC) (the \$600 per week supplement to regular UI benefits) and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)(coverage of independent contractors and self-employed individuals)
- Employer tax implications

In addition, DEO has issued an emergency rule waiving Florida's statutory one week waiting period, which can be found [here](#).

Many of the benefits are 100% federally funded. This includes the waived wait week for regular UI benefits, PUC, PUA, and pandemic emergency unemployment compensation (PEUC). Further, the CARES Act temporarily provides to reimbursing employers partial reimbursement (generally 50%) of payments they make into the unemployment trust fund.

Employers should also be aware that the CARES Act provides for temporary 100% financing of benefit costs under a Short-Time Compensation (STC) plan. More information about STC can be found [here](#). Additionally, the CARES Act provides many other types of employer relief outside of the unemployment program

Currently, there have been no changes to Florida law for employer charging except as noted above. Given the evolving environment, both claimants and employers may benefit from providing thorough answers in their responses to DEO. This will help expedite determinations once the legal landscape has settled and may alleviate the need for DEO to conduct follow-up inquiries.

Finally, DEO is in the process of implementing the newly released DOL guidance on CARES Act implementation. More information from DEO will be available soon.

### **Applying for Benefits**

Individuals may apply for benefits online using the CONNECT system [here](#). Those needing assistance can call 1-800-204-2418. Currently, there is not a location for in-person

application filing. DEO recommends filing an online application when possible to reduce processing time.

DEO has also developed a mail-in paper application, which is available in English, Spanish, and Creole, and is available [here](#). The paper applications will also be available this week for pick up at Career Source offices throughout the state. In addition, Career Source will provide assistance in completing applications. To find your local Career Source Office, click [here](#). Furthermore, more than 100 Fed Ex locations in Florida are providing free printing and mailing of paper applications.

For continuing updates, visit DEO at [floridajobs.org](http://floridajobs.org) and on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).