



**Employment Security Department**  
WASHINGTON STATE

# Expanded pandemic unemployment benefits guide

Self-employed, independent  
contractors & others affected by  
COVID-19

April 2020

# Here's the process

We are required to make sure you don't qualify for regular unemployment before you can apply for expanded benefits under the federal CARES Act (pandemic unemployment assistance).



## About this guide

- Using this guide can help you get your benefits faster – especially if you are self-employed, partially self-employed, an independent contractor or a worker whose wages and hours are not reported to ESD.
- This guide does not go through all questions on the applications – only those that could create a stumbling block during the COVID-19 crisis.
- Want to see more of the unemployment application? [Join a webinar!](#)

## Why does this matter?

We want to help you get your benefits as smoothly and quickly as possible. Following the tips in this guide will help you avoid issues that can delay your payment.

# Top 5 tips to avoid common application issues.

1. **Watch the tutorial video when setting up your account.** This is not the most intuitive process, especially if there's a chance you may already have a SecureAccess (SAW) account. [Watching this 9-minute video](#) may save you a lot of time.
2. **Enter your name as it appears on your Social Security card.** For example, if your Social Security card says "Robert T Smith" then enter that. Do not enter Robert Smith or Bob Smith. If you have married or changed your legal name but have not updated that name with the Social Security Administration, enter your prior name as it shows on your card.
3. **Double check your Social Security number and date of birth** before submitting your application.
4. **Read questions carefully before answering. Common mix-ups include:**
  - **Workers' compensation.** Unless you are *currently* receiving workers' compensation from the Department of Labor & Industries, do not answer yes to the workers' compensation question. (Even if you *were* receiving it but no longer are, answer "no.")
  - **U.S. citizenship and legal right to work.** If you are a U.S. citizen or have a legal right to work in the U.S., make sure you answer "yes."
  - **Select "no" on the job search question (in the weekly claim).** Job search is currently optional as a result of the "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" initiative. We still encourage you to look for work during this time if you have been laid off, but it is not required, so selecting no is the best option. Changes to job search requirements will be posted on our website at [esd.wa.gov](https://esd.wa.gov).
5. **Avoid manually entering your employer's information.** You may not recognize your employer's name in the application. Before manually entering your employer's info, find out your employer's legal business name or look up their Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) – this can usually be found on your paystub or W-2.

## Before you begin

1. Download the unemployment insurance application checklist and get your documents ready ([esd.wa.gov/self-employed](https://esd.wa.gov/self-employed))
2. Download the expanded benefits (PUA) application checklist and get your documents ready ([esd.wa.gov/self-employed](https://esd.wa.gov/self-employed))
3. Watch the tutorial video and set up your account ([esd.wa.gov/technical-support](https://esd.wa.gov/technical-support)).

(Already applied for unemployment and were denied? You do not need to apply again. Skip to page 14 for some tips on the application for expanded benefits and the weekly claim.)

# Unemployment application

The guidance on the next few pages should help you fill out the unemployment application.

There are also specific tips for self-employed, independent contractors and others who work for businesses that don't report hours and wages to ESD.


This does not cover all the questions on the unemployment application however, so if you'd like to see more you can [join a webinar or look at the webinar slideshow on our website.](#)



## Unemployment application

**(Section 1, “Your profile”): If you just became unemployed and the date is correct, select “yes.”**


**If you have been unable to submit your application prior to the date shown because the system had not been updated, or you have not been able to reach us on the phone (and the date is incorrect), select “no.”**

Submit an application

Welcome, Testing Account  Settings

 Home  Submit an application

Estimated percentage completed

30% 

Application for unemployment benefits

Your profile

John Smith

Certification

Certification cont'd

Certification cont'd

Your Identity

Driver's license

Benefits in other states

Injury or illness

Federal jobs

Military jobs

Work in other states

Claim start date

Your profile

Claim start date

You are applying for benefits this week, so your claim year start date is Mar 15 2020. Is this the date you want your claim to start?

Yes

No

Save

Cancel

< Previous

Next >

## Unemployment application

**(Section 1, “Your profile”): If you selected “no” on the last screen, put the date in that you last worked and first tried to apply.**

**Note: If you want to backdate your claim start date prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (March 8), you will need to contact us.**

Submit an application

Welcome, Testing Account

Settings

Home

Submit an application

Estimated percentage completed

30%

Application for unemployment benefits

Your profile

John Smith

Certification

Certification cont'd

Certification cont'd

Your Identity

Driver's license

Benefits in other states

Injury or illness

Federal jobs

Military jobs

Work in other states

Claim start date

Your profile

Claim start date

You are applying for benefits this week, so your claim year start date is Mar 15 2020. Is this the date you want your claim to start?  
What do you want your claim year start date to be?

You have requested to change your claim start date to Mar 8 2020. Is this correct?

Yes

No

Mar 8 2020

Mar 2020

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Today

Close

Save

Cancel

< Previous

Next >

## Unemployment application

**(Section 2, “Your employers”): If you worked ONLY for yourself or as an independent contractor, select “no.” (Not sure if this is you? [Read the information on our website](#) and determine if you are an independent contractor.)**

**If you worked both for someone else AND for yourself over the past 15-18 months, select “yes” and report the hours you worked for someone else.**

**You’ll report earnings from self-employment, as an independent contractor or for work with a business that does not report your wages and hours to ESD on the application for expanded benefits (called a “COVID-19 PUA Claim”).**

The screenshot shows the 'Submit an application' page for the Washington State unemployment application. The top navigation bar includes a hamburger menu, 'Submit an application', 'Welcome, Testing Account', and a 'Settings' gear icon. Below this is a breadcrumb trail: 'Home' > 'Submit an application'. A progress bar indicates 'Estimated percentage completed' at 50%. The main content area is titled 'Application for unemployment benefits' and has a sidebar with 'Your profile', 'Your employers', and 'Washington employers'. The 'Your employers' section is active, showing a question: 'Did you work for a Washington employer?' with 'Yes' and 'No' buttons. Below the question is explanatory text: 'What qualifies an employer as a Washington state employer? If you work for a national or international organization or individual within Washington, this would be classified as a Washington employer.' and a note: 'Note: Please make sure you have your employer’s name, address, and pay stubs available prior to selecting an employer from the list. Your claim may be delayed if the employer you have selected does not match the employer on your paystubs.' At the bottom, there are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons on the left, and 'Previous' and 'Next' buttons on the right.

**Submit an application** Welcome, Testing Account Settings

Home Submit an application

Estimated percentage completed

50%

**Application for unemployment benefits**

**Your profile**

**Your employers**

Washington employers

Add missing employer

**Your employers**

**Did you work for a Washington employer?** Yes No

What qualifies an employer as a Washington state employer? If you work for a national or international organization or individual within Washington, this would be classified as a Washington employer.

Note: Please make sure you have your employer’s name, address, and pay stubs available prior to selecting an employer from the list. Your claim may be delayed if the employer you have selected does not match the employer on your paystubs.

Many companies and organizations with multiple offices may designate a specific site to handle all unemployment. If you worked for one of these companies understand that the search results may not display your actual address, but rather the designated site.

Save Cancel Previous Next

## Unemployment application

(Section 2, “Your occupation”): Enter the type of work you do, for example, “landscaper.”

The screenshot shows a web application titled "Submit an application". At the top right, it says "Welcome, Testing Account" with a "Settings" gear icon. Below the header is a navigation bar with "Home" and "Submit an application". A progress bar indicates "Estimated percentage completed" at 60%.

The main section is titled "Application for unemployment benefits" and contains a sidebar with four items: "Your profile", "Your employers", "Your occupation", and "Occupation code". The "Your occupation" item is selected and highlighted in orange.

The "Your occupation" section contains the following text and form elements:

- Section header: "Occupation"
- Text: "What was your primary occupation during the base year? Click 'Search occupation.'"
- Form field: "Primary occupation" with a yellow background and a "Required" label. To its right is a "Search occupation" button, also with a "Required" label. This button is highlighted with a red rectangle.
- Text: "See this [employment data website](#) to determine whether your current occupation is in demand."
- Text: "Are you going to continue to look for work in this occupation?"
- Form field: Two buttons, "Yes" and "No", with "Yes" selected.

At the bottom of the form are "Save" and "Cancel" buttons on the left, and "Previous" and "Next" navigation buttons on the right.

## Unemployment application

(Section 3, “Your occupation”): Being on standby means you don’t have to look for work while on unemployment, but that requirement is currently optional anyway. At this time, you don’t need to request standby. You can select “no” to this question.

The screenshot shows the 'Your occupation' section of an unemployment application. On the left, a sidebar lists 'Your profile', 'Your employers', and 'Your occupation'. Under 'Your occupation', there are links for 'Occupation code', 'Union membership', 'Part-time work', and 'Standby'. The 'Standby' link is highlighted with an orange arrow. The main content area is titled 'Your occupation' and contains a section for 'Standby request'. It explains that 'Standby' means you are either unemployed with your regular employer due to a lack of work (expecting to return within four weeks) or unemployed and starting work with a new employer within two weeks. It also states that if your employer has told you you will be returning to work, you cannot request standby. Below this, there is a link to learn more about the Unemployment Standby benefit. At the bottom, the question 'Do you wish to request Standby?' is followed by two buttons: 'Yes' and 'No'. A large red arrow points down to the 'No' button, which is highlighted with a red box. A yellow 'Required' label is visible next to the 'No' button. At the bottom of the page, there are 'Save' and 'Cancel' buttons on the left, and 'Previous' and 'Next' buttons on the right.

Submit an application

Welcome, Testing Account

Settings

Home Submit an application

Estimated percentage completed

70%

Application for unemployment benefits

Your profile

Your employers

Your occupation

Occupation code

Union membership

Part-time work

Standby

Your occupation

Standby request

Standby means you are:

- Unemployed with your regular employer due to a lack of work and you expect to return to full-time work with the same employer within the next four weeks; or
- Unemployed and starting work with a new employer within the next two weeks.

If your employer has told you that you will be returning to work and given you an expected return to work date, you cannot request standby. Since standby waives your work search requirements, we will decide if you qualify, not your employer. You must look for work each week until we notify you that you are allowed to be on standby.

[Click here if you would like to learn more about the Unemployment Standby benefit.](#)

Do you wish to request Standby?

Yes No

Required

Save Cancel

Previous Next

## Unemployment application

(Section 3, “Your occupation”): This question is asking if your availability for work is affected by attending school or a training program.

If you are currently attending school or a training program (including remotely), then answer “yes.”

The screenshot shows a web application for submitting an unemployment application. At the top, there is a dark blue header with a hamburger menu icon, the text "Submit an application", and a user greeting "Welcome, Testing Account" with a settings gear icon. Below the header is a light blue navigation bar with a home icon and the text "Home" and "Submit an application".

Below the navigation bar, a section titled "Estimated percentage completed" shows a progress bar at 70%.

The main content area is titled "Application for unemployment benefits". On the left is a sidebar menu with the following items: "Your profile", "Your employers", "Your occupation", "Occupation code", "Union membership", "Part-time work", "Standby", and "School or training". The "School or training" item is highlighted with an orange arrow.

The main content area is titled "Your occupation" and contains a section titled "School or training". This section asks the question "Are you currently attending school or a training program?". There are two radio button options: "Yes" and "No". The "No" option is selected.

At the bottom of the form, there are three buttons: "Save", "Cancel", and a pair of buttons labeled "< Previous" and "Next >".

## Unemployment application

(Section 3, “Your occupation”): During COVID-19, most people should answer “yes.”

For context, this is a question about *you* – not about the current situation. If you would be available to work if it weren’t for COVID-19, a layoff or if your kids were in school, answer “yes.”

The screenshot shows a web application titled "Submit an application". At the top right, it says "Welcome, Testing Account" with a "Settings" gear icon. Below the header is a navigation bar with "Home" and "Submit an application". A progress bar indicates "Estimated percentage completed" at 80%. The main content area is titled "Application for unemployment benefits" and has a sidebar menu with sections: "Your profile", "Your employers", "Your occupation", and "Able and available". Under "Your occupation", there are options for "Occupation code", "Union membership", "Part-time work", "Standby", "School or training", and "Able and available". The "Able and available" section is active and contains the question "Are you physically able to work and available for work?". Below the question are two buttons: "Yes" and "No". A large red arrow points down to the "Yes" button, which is also highlighted with a red rectangular box. At the bottom of the form are "Save" and "Cancel" buttons on the left, and "Previous" and "Next" navigation buttons on the right.

## Unemployment application

(Section 5, “Claim summary”): **Double check your information is correct before pressing “Submit”!**

**You cannot go back after this step and changing your information or answers later will likely require you to call us, which will delay your benefit.**

The screenshot shows a web interface for submitting an unemployment application. At the top, a dark blue header contains a hamburger menu icon, the text 'Submit an application', and a user greeting 'Welcome, Testing Account' with a settings gear icon. Below this is a light blue navigation bar with a home icon and the text 'Home > Submit an application'. A progress bar indicates 'Estimated percentage completed' at 90%. A sidebar on the left, titled 'Application for unemployment benefits', lists steps: 'Your profile', 'Your employers', 'Your occupation', 'Getting paid', 'Payment options', 'Claim Summary', and 'Submit application'. The 'Submit application' step is highlighted with an orange arrow. The main content area, titled 'Submit application', contains the instruction 'To complete your application, select "Submit."' and a large empty text box. At the bottom, there are three buttons: 'Save', 'Cancel', and 'Submit'. The 'Submit' button is highlighted with a red square.

Submit an application

Welcome, Testing Account Settings

Home > Submit an application

Estimated percentage completed

90%

Application for unemployment benefits

Your profile

Your employers

Your occupation

Getting paid

Payment options

Claim Summary

Claim Summary

Submit application

Submit application

To complete your application, select "Submit."

Save Cancel

< Previous Submit

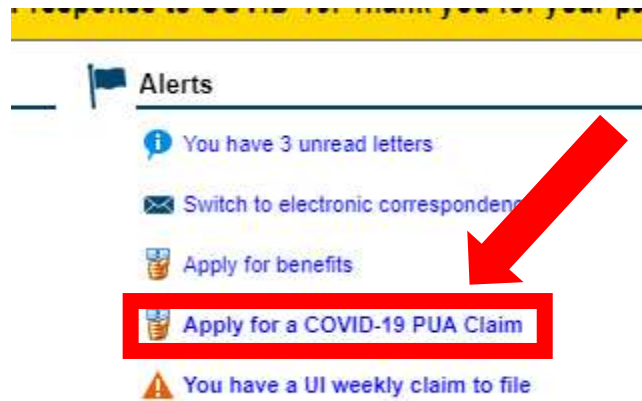
## Expanded benefits application (COVID-19 PUA Claim)

The next screens are for the application for expanded benefits, called a “COVID-19 PUA Claim” in eServices.

Please note: You will see many of the same questions on this application as you did on the unemployment application. Answer the questions the same way if nothing has changed, and use the previous pages of this guide to help with those questions.

## Expanded benefits application (COVID-19 PUA Claim)

**(eServices Homepage)** Once you are denied for regular unemployment benefits, you will see this link appear on your eServices homepage. Click it to start the application for expanded benefits.



## Expanded benefits application (COVID-19 PUA Claim)

**(Section 1: Your profile, “Work in other states”): For this question, we look at where you are physically located when you perform your work.**

**So, if you take jobs where you occasionally perform work located in other states, answer “yes” and report that information. (Like a landscaping job for a client in Idaho).**

**If you perform your work from Washington, but for clients in other states – for example, you develop a website or provide consulting services for a client in another state through virtual work – you should select “no.”**

The screenshot shows the 'COVID-19 PUA Claim' application interface. At the top, a blue navigation bar contains a home icon, the text 'Home', and a link 'Submit a COVID-19 PUA application'. Below this, the main heading is 'COVID-19 PUA Claim'. On the left, a sidebar titled 'Your profile' lists several sections: PUA Information, Certification, Eligibility Questions, Work in other states (highlighted with an orange arrow), Personal information, Driver's license, Benefits in other states, Federal jobs, and Military jobs. The main content area is titled 'Your profile' and contains a section 'Work in other states'. This section asks the question 'Have you worked in any state other than Washington in the last 18 months?'. To the right of the question are two yellow buttons labeled 'Yes' and 'No'. A yellow 'Required' label is positioned to the right of the 'No' button. At the bottom of the form, there are four buttons: 'Save', 'Cancel', '< Previous', and 'Next >'.

# Weekly claim

The next screens are in the weekly claim.

Weekly claims are very important. This is how you get paid each week.

3 tips on weekly claims:

1. Start submitting weekly claims the Sunday after you apply, even if you are not yet approved. This will make your payments come faster if you are approved.
2. You must file weekly claims every week to get paid every week.
3. Once you submit your application for expanded benefits, or "COVID-19 PUA Claim," you can then submit for previous weeks you were owed after you became eligible for expanded benefits.

## Weekly claim

**Job search section: Select “no” on this question – job search is currently optional. While we still encourage you to look for work if you have been laid off, it is not necessary to report your job search activities at this time.**

### Weekly claim

Weekly claim	Weekly claim
How to submit	
Fraud warning	
Paid time off	
Pay after last day worked	
Work for employers	
Self-employment	
Jury duty	
Workers' compensation	
Retirement pay	
School and training	
Able and available	
Job search	

**Job search questions for Sunday, Mar 8 2020 to Saturday, Mar 14 2020**

Did you complete at least **three** job search activities and keep a written record as required? If you didn't complete at least three activities, you must answer No.

☐ Yes ☒ No

Job search activities include contacting an employer by email, fax, Internet, mail, phone or in person. They also include participating in an in-person workshop, training or other job search activities at a WorkSource center or other employment center.

SaveCancel

< PreviousNext >

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