



Federal Stimulus Package Unemployment Benefits

March 31, 2020

The federal government recently enacted legislation to address the dramatic economic crisis brought on by COVID-19, including an unemployment benefits expansion. While this will financially help unemployed Illinoisans in the months to come, not everyone will be eligible for all the benefits contained in the package, and some benefits will not begin immediately.

Please do not call to inquire about these new federal programs. Our employees are processing applications for current benefits. Further details about the new federal programs and how to apply will be made available once they have been finalized.

How will this affect Illinois unemployment benefits?

Once the stimulus package has been implemented in Illinois, individuals receiving unemployment benefits will receive an additional \$600 each week above what they would receive in regular unemployment benefits until July 31, 2020. This will not be retroactively applied to unemployment benefits received in the past. In many cases, individuals will also be eligible for more weeks of unemployment above the 26 weeks provided under regular unemployment rules. Both of these benefits will be applied automatically if you qualify.

What do I do if I have already received my maximum benefits?

Some individuals who have received their entire 26 weeks of regular unemployment benefits may be eligible for more weeks of benefits under the stimulus package. If you have exhausted your benefits, or you are close to exhausting your benefits, we are finalizing the process to continue benefits under the stimulus package. Details will be available as soon as we have received further guidance from the US Department of Labor.

I am self-employed. Do I qualify under the new federal unemployment program?

Under regular unemployment rules, the incomes of self-employed workers, freelancers, and independent contractors are not subject to unemployment taxes and so typically these individuals are not eligible for unemployment benefits. The stimulus package creates a new, temporary program to help people who lose this type of work as a direct result of the current public health emergency. IDES will provide information about how to apply for this benefit as soon as it is finalized. Please do not apply at this time.

Thank you for waiting to apply until further details are available. This will allow our employees to address the large volume of claims for those individuals who are eligible under current benefit programs.