New Jersey [**Unemployment Insurance**](https://myunemployment.nj.gov/) benefits are meant for people who lose their job “through no fault of their own,” such as an employer’s lack of work or a layoff due to downsizing. If you voluntarily quit your job for reasons that were not work-related, or you were terminated for misconduct, your eligibility will need to be reviewed.

Important information for claiming weekly benefits due to the coronavirus emergency can be found [**here**](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmyunemployment.nj.gov%2Flabor%2Fmyunemployment%2Fcovidinstructions.shtml&data=02%7C01%7Cjholub%40njpsi.com%7Cce5fe51f236149dab2f708d7d27da27b%7C4f77a677bf2a4ea58078fd2cd9682275%7C0%7C0%7C637209309354263152&sdata=AGKYLY7h3K%2FCpx0BGil0QsCq2xSfTEaMlwMADOgI2AI%3D&reserved=0)**.**

To qualify for Unemployment Insurance benefits, you must meet all of the [**eligibility requirements**](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmyunemployment.nj.gov%2Flabor%2Fmyunemployment%2Fbefore%2Fabout%2Fwho%2Findex.shtml&data=02%7C01%7Cjholub%40njpsi.com%7Cce5fe51f236149dab2f708d7d27da27b%7C4f77a677bf2a4ea58078fd2cd9682275%7C0%7C0%7C637209309354273145&sdata=%2F%2FzYtCVFfbY4ql4SqFgg%2B5B%2FoKo4cfGxckDRVtcyrjM%3D&reserved=0) of the New Jersey Unemployment Compensation Law. Those who meet the requirements may receive benefits for up to 26 weeks during a one-year period.

The $2 trillion coronavirus relief bill being considered by Congress contains a substantial increase in unemployment benefits.  The legislation offers an additional 13 weeks of unemployment insurance, funded by the federal government. The bill also gives an additional $600 a week for up to four months.  This would be in addition to current jobless benefits offered by New Jersey.  The expanded benefits would last through December 2020.

To be eligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits in 2020, you must have earned at least $200 per week (a [**base week**](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmyunemployment.nj.gov%2Flabor%2Fmyunemployment%2Fhelp%2Fglossary%2Findex.shtml%23baseweek&data=02%7C01%7Cjholub%40njpsi.com%7Cce5fe51f236149dab2f708d7d27da27b%7C4f77a677bf2a4ea58078fd2cd9682275%7C0%7C0%7C637209309354273145&sdata=Obm8ZGxP1cP3%2FIulyJ6p7HUsJ3iC89G4ALEIUARzlPU%3D&reserved=0)) during 20 or more weeks in covered employment during the base year period, or you must have earned at least $10,000 in total covered employment during the base year period. For more information, [**click here**](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmyunemployment.nj.gov%2Flabor%2Fmyunemployment%2Fbefore%2Fabout%2Fwho%2Findex.shtml&data=02%7C01%7Cjholub%40njpsi.com%7Cce5fe51f236149dab2f708d7d27da27b%7C4f77a677bf2a4ea58078fd2cd9682275%7C0%7C0%7C637209309354283146&sdata=qHoGN2bfBqA6DU5PxfqJ0UW30O7f3D0A9I0LYeL0HFs%3D&reserved=0)**.**

To be eligible for [**partial benefits**](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmyunemployment.nj.gov%2Flabor%2Fmyunemployment%2Fhelp%2Fglossary%2Findex.shtml%23partialbenefits&data=02%7C01%7Cjholub%40njpsi.com%7Cce5fe51f236149dab2f708d7d27da27b%7C4f77a677bf2a4ea58078fd2cd9682275%7C0%7C0%7C637209309354293141&sdata=ZP0j5rlBtCS59dVYbly%2F0EkCVNJVO%2BAa1jtBVdBeF3s%3D&reserved=0), you cannot work more than 80 percent of the hours normally worked in the job. For example, if you worked a 40-hour week, you won't be able to get benefits if you work more than 32 hours. If your employer offers additional hours that you choose not to accept, your benefits may be affected.

After you first qualify for benefits, you will need to meet [**some additional requirements**](https://nam10.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fmyunemployment.nj.gov%2Flabor%2Fmyunemployment%2Fhelp%2Ffaqs%2Feligibility.shtml%23remain&data=02%7C01%7Cjholub%40njpsi.com%7Cce5fe51f236149dab2f708d7d27da27b%7C4f77a677bf2a4ea58078fd2cd9682275%7C0%7C0%7C637209309354293141&sdata=%2FIpbWgCS8aG%2FcuFXhbp0OENuN4HRQKHbRuOaezlix8A%3D&reserved=0) in order to keep receiving them.

New Jersey also has some of the most comprehensive [**Earned Sick Leave**](https://www.nj.gov/labor/worker-protections/earnedsick/law.shtml)**,** [**Temporary Disability**](https://myleavebenefits.nj.gov/labor/myleavebenefits/worker/tdi/) and [**Family Leave Insurance**](https://myleavebenefits.nj.gov/labor/myleavebenefits/worker/fli/index.shtml) laws in the country, which cover all employees – full-time, part-time, temporary and seasonal.

Governor Murphy also signed into law this week an expansion of the State’s Temporary Disability Insurance (TDI) and Family Leave Insurance (FLI) programs to provide more workers with access to paid leave benefits during public health emergencies.

The new law expands the definition of a “serious health condition” to allow individuals access to TDI and FLI benefits during a public health emergency if they must take time off of work because they are diagnosed with or suspected of exposure to a communicable disease or to take care of a family member diagnosed with or suspected of exposure to a communicable disease.

The law also expands New Jersey’s earned sick leave law to permit the use of earned sick time for isolation or quarantine recommended or ordered by a provider or public health official as a result of suspected exposure to a communicable disease, or to care for a family member under recommended or ordered isolation or quarantine.

Furthermore, federal legislation becomes effective April 2 that will provide 80 hours of emergency paid sick leave to employees of employers with fewer than 500 employees – beyond the maximum of 40 hours of paid leave to which all New Jersey employees are entitle under the state’s earned sick leave law – to employees who are stricken with COVID-19, those who have been exposed to the virus and workers whose child’s school has been closed or who cannot access child care due to COVID-19.

Parents whose child’s school has been closed, or who cannot access child care due to COVID-19, will also be eligible starting April 2 for leave under the Federal Family and Medical Leave Act.  The first 10 days of the expanded FMLA is unpaid.  The remaining 10 weeks must be paid by the employer.

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act also includes extended unemployment benefits; however, New Jersey has not qualified for these benefits at this time. If New Jersey does qualify for the extended benefits, applicants may not need to do anything new. Information will be posted on our [website](http://nj.gov/labor) as it becomes available.

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Lastly, the following bill also currently sits on the Govenor’s desk and awaits his action:

[**A-3846**](https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2020/Bills/A4000/3846_I1.HTM) - Creates “Temporary Lost Wage Unemployment Program;” allows persons to claim for lost wages due to coronavirus disease 2019, and employers to pay wages to workers ordered under quarantine by licensed healthcare practitioner; appropriates $20,000,000.

This bill allows individuals affected by the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic to recoup actual lost wages due to absence from work under certain circumstances and to assist employers who pay wages to workers who are ordered under quarantine by a licensed healthcare practitioner as a result of coronavirus disease 2019.

Specifically, the program will provide, to the extent funds are available, monetary relief to individuals for actual lost wages in an amount that is equivalent to the individual’s average weekly rate of compensation from the past calendar year, if the individuals do not have fully paid leave. The Department of Labor and Workforce Development will use moneys in the fund, in an amount not to exceed $10,000,000, to pay the lost wages of individuals due to:

     (1)   the individual’s absence from work due to the need to care for a family member;

     (2)   the individual’s absence from work due to the illness of the individual;

     (3)   the individual’s absence from work due to school or childcare facility being closed; and

     (4)   for such other purposes as determined by the commissioner.

No moneys shall be paid to an individual for any period or wages for which the individual receives benefits pursuant the "unemployment compensation law," R.S.43:21-1 et seq.

Moneys in the fund may be supplemented or replaced, or both, by any amounts received from the federal government for the same purposes as provided in the bill.

Additionally, the department will use moneys in the fund, not to exceed $10,000,000, to assist employers who pay wages to workers who are ordered under quarantine by a licensed healthcare practitioner as a result of coronavirus disease 2019.