

South Dakota Department of Labor & Regulation
123 W. Missouri Ave.
Pierre, SD 57501
dlr.sd.gov

For Immediate Release: Friday, March 20, 2020
Media Contact: Dawn Dovre, 605-773-3094

Unemployment Claims: What Workers and Businesses Need to Know

PIERRE, S.D. – The Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) reports a dramatic increase in activity at the Unemployment Insurance Call Center during the last week due to COVID-19 related layoffs.

“We are adding additional staff to the Call Center to handle the influx of claims, assigning additional staff to help reset passwords, and adding more phone lines,” said state Labor and Regulation Secretary Marcia Hultman. “Job Service offices will remain closed to the public until March 30, but staff will be onsite answering calls.”

Tips for Workers

- To view possible eligibility scenarios, visit https://dlr.sd.gov/ra/covid_19_ra_eligibility.aspx.
- To file an unemployment claim, visit raclaims.sd.gov or call 605-626-3179 or 605-626-2452.
- The current phone wait time is approximately one hour, so online filing is encouraged.
- You will need your Social Security number, driver’s license or State ID, and 18 months of work history.
- If you cannot get your claim filed in the first week, do not stress. Claims can be back dated.
- Unemployment benefits are a partial wage replacement. The average benefit is approximately half of your weekly wage, capped at a maximum of \$414 per week.
- The quickest way to receive benefit payments is by direct deposit. The debit card option will add a few days for processing and mailing.
- As of now, a COVID-19 related layoff lasting less than 10 weeks does not require the person to be able, available, and actively looking for work.
- The non-paid waiting week, typically the first week of compensable benefits, is still in effect.
- People who are being paid to work from home or those receiving paid sick or vacation leave are NOT eligible for unemployment compensation benefits.
- General questions can be directed to the Customer Service Center at 605-626-2452.

“We understand this is the first-time many people have had to file for unemployment, and it’s unfamiliar territory,” said Secretary Hultman. “Our team is here to help you navigate the process.”

Tips for Businesses

- A temporary layoff related to COVID-19 may result in eligibility for unemployment benefits. To view possible eligibility scenarios, visit https://dlr.sd.gov/ra/covid_19_ra_eligibility.aspx.
- Questions should be emailed to DLRRADivision@state.sd.us to receive a direct and timely response. Please leave the phone lines open for claimants if possible.
- [Sign up for the State Information Data Exchange System \(SIDES\) e-Response](#) to receive all notices by email rather than by mail.

The Reemployment Assistance (RA) program provides temporary financial assistance for people who have lost their job through no fault of their own. Workers who become unemployed because their employer needs to temporarily shut down or isolate workers due to COVID-19 might be eligible to receive benefits.

Many variables can affect a worker’s eligibility and an employer’s liability for benefits. DLR examines each case on an individual basis and makes determinations in accordance with the law.