



HOW TO APPLY FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

You should file for unemployment insurance benefits in the same week you become unemployed. Your claim for benefits is effective the week in which it is filed.

To Apply Online: Visit Customer Self-Service (CSS) portal <https://uidirect.vec.virginia.gov/CSS/CSSLogon.htm> (Best option! Click the GREEN ID.me button!)

We strongly recommend you apply online with the new alternate login option, ID.me:

- Fast and secure
- Use ID.me for filing initial and weekly claims, accessing documents, and quick processing of your claim.
- ID.me is a trusted digital identity verification tool.
- Just have your Social Security number, driver's license, or government-issued ID handy.

To Apply by Phone:

- Please call 1-866-832-2363 (toll-free)
- Available 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday to Friday
- ***Please be aware that there may be long wait times when using the phone method.***

You Will Need the Following to Apply for Unemployment Benefits:

- Social Security Number
- Employment History for the Last 18 Months: Names, addresses, phone numbers, and dates of employment. Review your most recent W2 or pay stub for accuracy.
- Union Workers: Name and union number if applicable.
- Non-U.S. Citizens: Alien Registration number.
- Payment Method: Choose between VA Debit Card or Direct Deposit. For Direct Deposit, you'll need your bank's routing number and your account number.

Personal Identification Number (PIN)

When you file your initial claim for benefits, a six-digit PIN will be mailed to you. Use this PIN to file your weekly claims and check your benefit status. Remember and safeguard your PIN as it provides access to personal information.

Job Search Requirements

You must search for work and make at least two job contacts per week. You must start your job search from the first week of your unemployment claim. If you are on a temporary layoff with a definite return to work date within six (6) weeks of your last day of work, you may be eligible for a waiver of work search and job search registration.

Filing Weekly Claims

File your weekly claims online or by phone. You must file weekly claims each week to receive benefits. Each Sunday, you should file your weekly claim for the previous week. Failure to file your weekly claims in a timely manner may result in denial of benefits.

- Online filing: <https://uidirect.vec.virginia.gov/CSS/CSSLogon.htm>
- Phone filing: 1-800-897-5630

Payment and Processing

Claimants are generally paid within 21 days of filing for benefits. The 21-day period is the goal set by the U.S. Department of Labor for all states to achieve. However, some claims may require additional time or review for eligibility. Examples of such instances include verifying wages, addressing incomplete requests for information, and resolving eligibility based on how employment ended for the claimant.

It's important to respond to all requests for information promptly and remember the first week a claimant is eligible for benefits, is a waiting week/period and no benefits are paid. For more information, visit www.vec.virginia.gov, click "Unemployment" in the top menu and select "Customer Self-Service."

VEC IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER/PROGRAM -Auxiliary aids & services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Virginia Relay enables people who are deaf, hard of hearing, Deaf/Blind, or speech disabled to communicate by TTY (text telephone). Language assistance services are available free of charge. TTY: Virginia Relay 711 or call 800-828-1140.