



Unemployment News for Employers

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The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in unprecedented levels of unemployment throughout the United States, Wisconsin included. From March 15, 2020 through August 22, 2020, Wisconsinites filed nearly 866,900 initial claims for unemployment insurance (UI) benefits and over 5.9 million weekly claims for benefits. State and federal UI programs provided over \$3.49 billion in unemployment insurance benefits during this period.

Employers in Wisconsin were provided the option for relief of unemployment insurance benefit charging for employees laid off due to the public health emergency declared by Executive Order 72 who filed initial unemployment claims for the weeks of March 15 through December 26, 2020.

This year, DWD saw a rapid increase in use of the Work-Share program. Through August 22, 2020, over 830 Work-Share plans were implemented, helping to avoid over 7,900 layoffs across numerous industry sectors.

Wisconsin and our country as a whole learned many valuable lessons, none of which being more important than the limitations of outdated, linear technology systems that manage the benefit processing and payment systems, which contributed to delays in getting benefits into the hands of individuals out of work through no fault of their own.

As we move closer to the end of 2020, DWD looks forward to working with Wisconsin employers, members of the Wisconsin State Legislature, and the Unemployment Insurance Advisory Council to bring Wisconsin's Unemployment Insurance system into the 21st century.

RELIEF OF CHARGING

The department enacted an emergency rule to ensure that benefit charges and adjustments for March 15, 2020 through June 30, 2020 will not affect employer contribution rates for 2021. Contribution rates for 2022 will be calculated after all recharging is complete.

In addition, if your employees were laid off due to the public health emergency declared by Executive Order 72 and filed **initial** claims during the Wisconsin's Stay at Home order from March 15, 2020 through May 16, 2020, your account will automatically be considered for relief of charging for these benefits. For **initial** claims filed after May 16, 2020, you will need to file a request for relief of charging by completing and submitting form UCB-18823-E via encrypted email. To access this form, go to website: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uitax/relief-of-charging.htm>.

REPORTING JOB REFUSALS

UI Employers can now report individuals who are filing for UI but have refused a job offer by visiting <https://unemployment.wisconsin.gov/employerfeedbackform>.

You will choose "Report Individual Who Refused Work" and be prompted to answer several questions regarding the individual who refused the work, and the job offer itself. A confirmation email is sent to the person submitting the information. The reported information is sent to a UI Job Refusal Mailbox, prompting the creation of an eligibility issue on the individual's claim that will need adjudication.

NEW! DWD EWORKBOARD

The DWD eWorkBoard is a digital repository of the Wisconsin workplace posters meant to give employees and employers quick and easy access to information that is required to be posted in the workplace, including the Notice to Employees About Applying for Wisconsin Unemployment Benefits (UCB-7-P). Visit <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/eworkboard>.

PUBLIC HEARING

The Unemployment Insurance Advisory Council (UIAC) represents employee and employer interests and recommends changes to the unemployment law to the Legislature. The UIAC is interested in hearing your comments on Wisconsin's Unemployment Insurance program and suggestions for changing the law and improving the program. Provide your suggestions for changes to the Unemployment Insurance Law at the 2020 Public Hearing, which will be conducted virtually on **November 9, 2020** from 2:00-4:00 p.m. and **November 10, 2020** from 4:30-6:30 p.m. Register for the hearing at <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uibola/uiac/pubhearings/2020.htm>.

If you are unable to attend the public hearing, you may submit your comments no later than November 11, 2020 either electronically at UILAWCHANGE@dwd.wisconsin.gov, or send written comments to Janell Knutson, Chair; Unemployment Insurance Advisory Council, PO Box 8942, Madison, WI 53708.

DWD INTERNET LINK UPDATES

You may notice new links/URLs for employer and service provider related files on DWD's Internet site (including publications and forms) as part of phase 2 of the department's Internet redesign efforts.

2020-2021 FRIDAY FUNDAMENTALS LABOR LAW TRAINING

DWD presents a series of interactive, educational web conferences open to the public that provide basic information about one of the following topics: Fair Employment, Wage and Hour, Worker's Compensation, Vocational Rehabilitation, Unemployment Insurance, and Employment and Training laws. The \$36.00 registration fee for each session includes reference materials in advance of each session. A certificate of attendance is also available for continuing education credits. Visit <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/laborlaw/frifund.htm> for the 2020-2021 sessions schedule, or sign up to receive email notification when new training has been scheduled.

UI SYSTEMS TARGETED BY FRAUDSTERS

As reported across the nation, fraudsters are targeting state UI systems in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic through various schemes and identity theft. Wisconsin's UI system has flagged bad actors using stolen personal information from sources outside of the agency, such as from massive external data breaches, to apply for benefits and attempt to route payments to their own bank accounts.

If you receive a UCB-16 separation notice and/or a charging notice from UI for employees who are employed and working, annotate on the form and return it to UI.

If employees receive mail from UI and they have not filed a claim, they should report it to their HR department and to UI via our updated web form: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/ui/fraud/report.htm>.

Resources for identity theft victims can be found at: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/ui/fraud/identity.htm>.

NOTICE REQUIREMENT AT TIME OF SEPARATION

DWD will take steps to promulgate an emergency rule that requires employers to provide notice of the availability of unemployment insurance to individual employees at the time of separation, which is required as a condition of receiving federal funds under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, Division D Emergency Unemployment Insurance Stabilization and Access Act (EUISAA). The statement of scope for this rule has been approved by the Secretary and the Governor and the Unemployment Insurance Advisory Council has recommended proceeding with the emergency rule. If approved by the Governor, this rule will be effective November 2, 2020. More information is available on our website at: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/publications/ui/notice.htm>.

EMPLOYER HANDBOOK

The Unemployment Insurance Handbook for Employers is intended to assist employers in meeting their obligations under the Wisconsin Unemployment Insurance (UI) law, Chapter 108, Wisconsin Statutes. To keep up-to-date on all UI program laws and policies, please view or print this handbook at <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/ui201>.

Wage information and other confidential unemployment insurance information may be requested and used for other governmental purposes, including verification of an individual's eligibility for other government programs. For complete information on the rules regarding disclosure, refer to Wisconsin's Administrative Code Chapter DWD 149.