



Unemployment Insurance Compensation for School Year Employees during COVID-19

Many substitute teachers, SEAs, and clerical workers have been effectively laid-off by the MMSD since the closure of the schools on March 16, 2020. In addition, there are employees who thought they had secured a summer school position and have had those offers recently rescinded. Given the unprecedented unemployment and the difficulty getting hired in this environment, it is important that eligible employees file an unemployment claim as soon as possible.

School year employees have special rules regarding unemployment compensation due to the scheduled breaks and the "reasonable assurance" to return to the same position following the break period. This means that regular school year employees are not eligible for unemployment compensation during the summer, winter, or spring break periods. Additional employment outside of MMSD will be considered if you file an unemployment claim and have been laid off from a different job as well.

- Additional information regarding [unemployment compensation for school year employees](#).

There are two categories for claimants for unemployment compensation.

1. **Regular Unemployment Insurance** - Employees who are laid off by MMSD should file or should have filed for *Regular Unemployment Insurance*. This is the way most folks will file for unemployment benefits due to school year layoffs.
2. **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA)**. The second category, PUA, is for employees who are unable to work due to COVID-19 but would not normally qualify for unemployment insurance. [More info. on PUA](#). The PUA track is made possible by the federal [Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security \(CARES\) Act](#), implemented in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

If you are unsure under what program to file, see this flowchart to help you determine which one is right for you: [Regular UI or PUA Flowchart](#)

A relevant example for the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance is an employee who had been *offered* a job for summer school and had it subsequently rescinded.

Regardless of the type of unemployment assistance you may qualify for the CARES Act includes an additional \$600/week through July 25, 2020.

Some additional enhancements to UI as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic include:

- Waiver of the one-week waiting period, benefits start immediately
- Waiver of the work search requirement
- Expanded eligibility for benefits (PUA)
- Additional 13 weeks of eligibility through the [Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation \(PEUC\)](#)

It is important to file the claim as soon as you know you are eligible. There is currently a long processing time for the claims, and it appears that all 'school year employee' claims are flagged for review by an adjudicator because of the special rules referenced above. If your claim payments are delayed, you can expect to receive retroactive payments back to the day you first become eligible once it is finally processed.

The application process must be done online at this time at: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/>. While you can call the Unemployment Insurance office, it is very difficult to get through to a person due to the historic volume of claims being filed.

To apply, you will first create an account with DWD by entering a username and password. You will need to provide the following information at the time that you make your initial claim:

- (1) your Social Security Number;
- (2) a valid email or mobile number and current mailing address;
- (3) your Wisconsin Driver's License Number or ID number;
- (4) the names and addresses of every employer for whom you worked *in the past 18 months*.

You will be asked to enter your personal information and then will answer a series of questions about your situation. **Note:** there is one question about a Union Hiring Hall which **does not** apply to any MMSD employees and should be answered "No."

You will need to claim any income you earn while unemployed from the District. Additionally, you must indicate whether you are receiving any type of retirement income, excluding Social Security, if applicable.

DO NOT claim your federal stimulus check as income for unemployment claims.

You will also be asked how to receive your benefits (direct deposit / debit card) and whether you want DWD to deduct federal and state taxes (UI is taxable income) or you can do that yourself when you file your taxes.

After filing your initial claim, you must register for the [Wisconsin Jobs Center](#) even though you do not have to conduct a work search for the foreseeable future. To log-in to complete that process, you will use the same username/password you used to file your initial UI claim.

Once your initial claim is established, you will need to file a *weekly claim* to indicate your continued eligibility. You have 14 days from the end of the claims week to file. The claims week runs Sunday - Saturday. You will need to log-in to your account with DWD each week and file your weekly claim. Failure to file a weekly claim could result in a loss of benefits for that week.

There is a lot of information on the DWD website to consume. Two of the more important references are:

- [The Handbook for Claimants](#)
- [The COVID-19 FAQs](#)

While we understand the anxiety and fear around the coronavirus and the economic calamity that has resulted from it, there are helpful resources through your Union. We cannot solve every problem but we can help guide you and provide support during this crisis. If necessary, we can engage legal counsel to help.

MTI Members are eligible for \$1,000 Solidarity Fund loan that is interest-free and can be repaid in installments to be deducted from your pay following the return your return to work. If you have been waiting for your benefits to clear or if you need help with short-term financial problems, you apply for this loan on the MTI Website:

[Solidarity Fund Loan Application](#)

Please review this information and try to file your claim if you have not yet done so. It may take approximately 1.5 to 2 hours, depending on how many questions you have about the process. MTI can provide assistance and try to find answers for unusual circumstances.

Email mti@madisonteachers.org or call (608) 257-0491 with questions or problems filing your claim.