

UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

Frequently Asked Questions for Student Veterans

Student veterans, including those utilizing their GI bill Benefits, may qualify for unemployment compensation if they meet applicable state and federal guidelines. Each state administers a separate unemployment insurance program, but all states follow the same guidelines established by federal law.

To start or if you have questions about filing an unemployment benefits claim, please [contact your state unemployment insurance program](#).

Regular State Unemployment Compensation (UC) Benefits

Generally, you qualify for benefits if you:

- Become unemployed because of a lack of suitable work. In most (but not all) instances, this means you were separated from your last job due to your employer temporarily or permanently eliminating your job (although a reduction in work hours and pay also can sometimes qualify for UC).
- Meet work and wage requirements. You must meet your state's minimum requirements for wages earned and time worked during an established period of time referred to as a "base period." (In most states, the base period is the first four out of the last five completed calendar quarters before you filed your claim.)
- Meet any additional state UC eligibility requirements.

Unemployment Compensation for Ex-Servicemembers (UCX)

Generally, you qualify for benefits if you:

- Were in active duty (or in active reserve status) in the military during the "base period" of the claim, as established by your state. (In most states, the base period is the first four out of the last five completed calendar quarters before you filed your claim.)
- Were honorably discharged.
- Completed the first full term of service for which you enlisted, or were discharged earlier for any of several reasons specified in federal law; or if a reservist, you must have completed 180 days of continuous active duty.
- You meet all other state eligibility requirements.

UCX applicants must contact the state where they are physically located when filing. Additionally, applicants should have their [DD214](#) available to facilitate claim processing.

Unemployment Insurance Flexibilities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Federal law permits significant flexibility for states to provide unemployment insurance benefits in multiple scenarios related to COVID-19, and recently a number of new programs were put in place temporarily providing benefits in larger amounts, for longer durations, and under a broader set of conditions than before the pandemic. Some examples (and not an exhaustive list) of COVID-19 scenarios where unemployment benefits may be available, subject to specified requirements, include:

- An employer temporarily ceases operations due to COVID-19, preventing employees from coming to work;
- An individual is quarantined with the expectation of returning to work after the quarantine is over; and
- An individual leaves employment due to a risk of exposure or infection or to care for a family member.

In addition, the CARES Act expanded coverage to workers not normally eligible for unemployment benefits, such as self-employed, independent contractor, and gig workers. The CARES Act also increases unemployment insurance benefits by \$600 per week for eligible individuals and provides up to 13 additional weeks of unemployment benefits to individuals who have exhausted regular unemployment compensation (including UCX).

To apply for unemployment benefits, please contact your state unemployment office. [Find your state's unemployment insurance program contact information.](#)

Additional Resources

[Unemployment Insurance Relief During COVID-19 Outbreak](#)

