Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Unemployment Insurance and COVID-19
4-10-2020

How do I apply for traditional unemployment insurance (UI)?
If you are unemployed and you've worked for a covered employer (an employer who pays UI tax) in the last 18 months - please apply for unemployment insurance now at
https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/apply.

How do I apply for COVID-19-related (CARES Act) unemployment insurance?
If you are filing because of the CARES Act (Federal Stimulus Bill) (e.g. self-employed, independent contractors, workers with limited work history, and others), the State is asking you to wait to file* because the system is not yet set up to accept your application. The state is waiting on additional guidance from the US Department of Labor. The state expects those changes to be complete by mid-to late-April. There is no need to call the Unemployment Insurance Call Center at this time. The Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development will announce when you are able to start filing your initial claim. The state will have the most up-to-date information at https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/uiben/caresact.

It is important to note that benefits will start from the time you became eligible for unemployment, not from the time your application is submitted or approved. This is also true of the additional $600 per week.

How do I contact the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development?
DWD is experiencing an unprecedented call volume to its unemployment insurance and IT help lines. Unless you have received official notification from Unemployment Insurance that you must call our call center, please search for your answer at dwd.wi.gov/covid19/ or dwd.wi.gov/uiben/faqs in order to free up phone lines for folks who are required to call in.

For the most up to date COVID-19-related unemployment insurance information and a list of updated frequently asked questions, please visit https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/covid19/public/ui.htm.