

**I am unemployed. Can I get unemployment benefits?** Unemployment benefits provide temporary income to workers who are unemployed through no fault of their own. To be eligible:

- You must have earned enough wages in the last year and a quarter before filing;
- You must be able and available for work;
- You must not have been terminated for misconduct; and
- You must not have voluntarily quit your last job without good cause related to the work.

**How do I file for unemployment benefits?** Apply to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) online at [www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/bnfts/applying-unemployment-benefits.html#howApply](http://www.twc.state.tx.us/ui/bnfts/applying-unemployment-benefits.html#howApply), or by calling 800-939-6631 weekdays from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. You will need:

- Your last employer's business name, address and phone number.
- The first and last dates (month, day and year) you worked for your last employer. If you worked for that employer on more than one occasion, give the most recent dates.
- The number of hours worked and your pay rate if you worked the same week (Sun. through Sat) you are applying for benefits.
- Information about the normal wage for the job you are seeking.
- Alien Registration number (if not a U.S. citizen).

Be prepared to explain how you became unemployed. The TWC will contact your last employer and ask about your job separation. If you and your employer disagree on why you lost your job, you will have a chance to explain your side of the story. An initial decision to grant or deny benefits will be mailed to you and your former employer.

**How will I receive my unemployment benefit?** TWC will provide instructions on how to request payments. Payments are paid either through direct deposit to your bank account or through an unemployment benefits debit card. Unemployment benefits must be reported as income to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Unemployment benefits are also subject to withholding for child support. If you need to lower your child support payments, contact the office of Attorney General-Child Support Division, [www.oag.state.tx.us/cs](http://www.oag.state.tx.us/cs) and ask for a review to lower your child support. You can also use self-help forms to modify (change) your child support. Go to [www.texaslawhelp.org](http://www.texaslawhelp.org)

**Do I have to look for work while receiving unemployment?** Yes. Within 3 days of your application for benefits, you complete a work search application at [www.workintexas.com](http://www.workintexas.com), a TWC website with job listings and job search information. If you do not have access to a computer, you can complete this application at a Texas Workforce Solutions office or any public workforce office in the state where you are located. To get unemployment benefits, you must continue to look for work. The TWC will send you a letter telling you how many work search activities you have to complete each week, and you are required to keep a record of your job search as proof that you are looking for work.

**What if the TWC denies my application for unemployment benefits?** You can appeal.

- The TWC decision letter will have the deadline to appeal and instructions on how to do it.
- You have 14 days from the date the TWC's denial letter is *mailed* (not received) to send in your written appeal letter. Your appeal letter can be a simple written statement that says you disagree with the decision and want to appeal it.
- Send your letter by fax or by certified mail to prove that you sent it before the deadline. If you miss the deadline, the initial decision denying benefits stands.
- If you appeal on time, the TWC will schedule a telephone hearing. *Make sure the TWC has your correct phone number and address at all times.*
- The telephone hearing is the only time you will be able to tell your side of the story. If you lose at the hearing you can file another appeal, but it is more difficult to win.
- If you win at either stage, the TWC will pay back the benefits denied. If you lose, you must repay the unemployment benefits you have already received.

For more information on unemployment benefits, the appeal process, and how to represent yourself, go to [www.twc.state.tx.us/customers/jsemp/unemployment-benefits.html](http://www.twc.state.tx.us/customers/jsemp/unemployment-benefits.html).