Kentucky: Unemployment Benefits, Expansion of Coverage to Previously Non-Covered Persons and Waiver of One-Week Waiting Period and Work Search Requirements

Description of Program and Relief

As of March 25, 2020, self-employed persons, independent contractors, freelance workers, substitute teachers and childcare workers employed by religious or non-profit organizations may seek unemployment insurance. Similarly, people who have left their employment because of a reasonable risk of exposure to COVID-19 (self-quarantine) or who are caring for a family member affected by COVID-19 may obtain unemployment insurance.

In addition, the conditions of access to the existing Kentucky unemployment insurance plan have been relaxed.

The normal one-week waiting period has been waived for any person making a claim for unemployment benefits, regardless of the reasons for such person’s unemployment. Because the seven-day waiting period is now waived, if a Kentuckian is approved for benefits, the first payment they receive will be for two weeks of benefits and not just one, unlike the regular procedure.

Claimants are asked to apply on the day corresponding with the first letter of their last name. Here is the schedule:

- Sunday: A-D
- Monday: E-H
- Tuesday: I-L
- Wednesday: M-P
- Thursday: Q-U
- Friday: V-Z and others who missed their day.

Kentucky’s unemployment insurance provides between $39 and $415 per week, depending on the lost income, for 26 weeks for employees who lose their job through no fault of their own.
Government or Lead Agency

Cabinet for Education and Workforce Development and Kentucky Office of Unemployment Insurance

Dates Available

The Unemployment Insurance Program was an existing program and is available at all times. The expansion of coverage is effective March 25, 2020. The waivers are effective March 16, 2020 until the end of the state of emergency.

Eligibility Requirements/Restrictions

General eligibility criteria include: being a Kentucky resident, meeting certain income requirements for work completed in Kentucky and being out of work at no fault of one’s own. The requirement to be able, available and actively searching for work has been waived.

An eligibility review may be conducted by going to: https://uiclaims.des.ky.gov/ebenefit/eben.htm

Application Deadlines (If Applicable)

Kentuckians who have applied for unemployment insurance since March 6 do not need to reapply.

Contact for More Information

To apply for unemployment insurance, you may call (502) 875-0442. The line is open Monday through Friday, excluding holidays, from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

The Kentucky Unemployment Insurance Helpline can be reached at (502) 564-2900.

List of Additional Information

To visit the website of Kentucky Office of Unemployment Insurance, please visit: https://kcc.ky.gov/career/Pages/What%20You%20Need%20To%20Know.aspx

To file a claim, please go to: https://uiclaims.des.ky.gov/ebenefit/eben.htm

A press release from the Governor announcing the expansion of coverage can be found here: https://kentucky.gov/Pages/Activity-stream.aspx?n=GovernorBeshear&prId=104