

File a Claim

If you've lost your job in Washington, D.C., you can file a claim at the [District of Columbia Department of Employment Services website](#).

Eligibility

You must be unemployed through no fault of your own, as defined by Washington, D.C., law. Here are the three primary ways you may lose your job and how each relates to your eligibility for benefits:

- **Layoffs** due to “downsizing” or a reduction-in-workforce will qualify you for benefits.
- **Firing** for reasons related to basic misconduct makes you ineligible for benefits during the first eight weeks following your termination. For gross misconduct, you won't receive benefits until you've been re-employed for 10 weeks and earned at least 10 times the weekly benefit amount of your claim. However, if you're fired simply because you weren't a good fit or lacked the skills to perform the job, you may be able to collect.
- **Quitting** would make you ineligible for benefits. If there was a compelling personal reason that forced you to leave (e.g., sexual harassment, dangerous working conditions, relocation with a military spouse), you will likely receive benefits.

You must have made a certain amount of money before losing your job, which is calculated by your base period. Your base period is the earliest four of the five completed calendar quarters before you filed your benefits claim. For example, if your claim was filed on Oct. 10, 2019, your base period would be the 12-month period beginning July 1, 2018, and ending June 30, 2019. To qualify for benefits in Washington, D.C., you must have made:

- at least \$1,300 in wages in one quarter of the base period;
- wages in at least two quarters of the base period;
- at least \$1,950 in wages for the entire base period; and
- total base period wages that are at least one and one half times the wages in your highest quarter.

Washington, D.C., offers an alternative base period, which looks at the wages from the four most recently completed quarters.

You must be able to work, available to work, and seeking employment. If you find a suitable position, you must accept it. Suitability varies based on your past training, education and experience. Over time, if you still haven't found work, you may have to compromise on a job that doesn't quite match what you were doing before. You may be asked periodically to report your efforts to the American Job Center.

Duration of Benefits

Washington, D.C., residents can collect unemployment benefits for up to 26 weeks.

Weekly Benefit Rate

You can receive a maximum of \$432 per week.