

## File a Claim

If you've lost your job in Montana, you can File a Claim at the [Montana Department of Labor & Industry's website](#).

## Eligibility

You must be unemployed through no fault of your own, as defined by Montana 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-force will qualify you for benefits.
- **Firing** for reasons related to misconduct makes you ineligible for benefits. 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** your job will make you ineligible for benefits unless you can prove there was a compelling work-related reason that forced you to leave (e.g., sexual harassment, dangerous working conditions, relocation with a military spouse).

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. In Montana, in order to be eligible, you must meet one of the following requirements:

- Your base period wages must be one-and-a-half times your wages in the highest-paid quarter of the base period, and at least 7 percent of the state's average annual wage
- Your wages for the full base period must be at least 50 percent of the state's average annual wage.

Montana also offers an alternative base period, which looks at your last four 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 depending on your skill set, training, salary and more. 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.

## Duration of Benefits

Montana residents can collect unemployment benefits for a maximum of 28 weeks, which is extended when there's very high unemployment.

## Weekly Benefit Rate

You can receive somewhere between \$151 and \$510 per week.