

# Alabama Workers to Receive Unemployment Benefits Due to COVID-19

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The Alabama Department of Labor announced this week that workers who are not able to work due to COVID-19 will be eligible to file for unemployment benefits starting on March 23, 2020.

“We understand that we are entering a difficult time for workers and employers,” said Alabama Department of Labor Secretary Fitzgerald Washington in the March 16, 2020, [press release](#). “We want to help those who may be temporarily financially impacted by helping them to replace some of their lost income while being unable to work. We are working with both federal and state government to ensure that we are doing all that we can to help ease the burden during a potentially trying time.”

## Eligible Workers

In its press release, the Alabama Department of Labor stated it will change existing unemployment rules to allow workers to file a claim for unemployment compensation benefits if they are:

- “quarantined by a medical professional or a government agency”;
- “laid off or sent home without pay for an extended period by their employer due to COVID-19 concerns”;
- “diagnosed with COVID-19”; or
- “caring for an immediate family member who is diagnosed with COVID-19.”

## Modification of Other Unemployment Benefits Requirements

The press release also states, “the requirement that a laid-off worker be ‘able and available’ to work while receiving unemployment compensation benefits will be modified for claimants who are affected by COVID-19 as described above. Additionally, claimants will not have to search for other work provided they take reasonable steps to preserve their ability to return to work when a quarantine is lifted or illness subsides. The waiting week, which is typically the first week of compensable benefits, will also be waived.”

## Non-Eligible Workers

Alabama workers not eligible for unemployment compensation benefits include employees working

from home and those receiving paid sick or vacation leave. These workers are not eligible whether they experience any or all of the situations listed above.

## **How to File a Claim**

Affected individuals can file for benefits online on the Alabama [Department of Labor website](#). Employers that provide this information to their employees may want to refrain from making assurances as to benefits eligibility.

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