

Employers' Unemployment Insurance (UI) FAQ

Do I need to terminate (lay off) my employees in order for them to receive UI benefits?

- No. If you choose to keep your employees on payroll (still employed), they are still eligible to apply for UI benefits if they are experiencing a reduction in hours.

Will my employees collect more UI benefits if they are separated?

- No. Whether your employees are still employed (still attached to your company) or separated, they will be eligible for the same monetary amount.

Will I be charged if my employee collects unemployment?

- Unless you are a self-financed non-profit, employers are not charged directly when their employees receive unemployment. The claims are paid from the employer's UI fund. Typically, utilization of the UI fund impacts your future UI tax rate. However, given the current situation with the COVID-19 pandemic, it's possible that these claims won't impact your future rate. You should consult with the State UI office if you are concerned about your UI tax rate.

How do my employees file for UI benefits?

- Please see our detailed, step-by-step instructions located on our COVID-19 resource page.

I have furloughed my employee; will they qualify for UI benefits?

- The terminology "furlough" has no effect on UI benefits. As long as they are experiencing any type of reduction in hours, we recommend they file for UI benefits so that eligibility can be determined.

My employees are trying to login to the State of Hawaii UI website and the site isn't working.

- Please be aware that there is a high volume of individuals filing for UI benefits, which is causing the State of Hawaii's website intermittent issues. Employees need to be patient and keep trying.
- We recommend attempting to file during a time when the volume may not be as high. The website is available during these times:
 - » Monday through Friday 6:30 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. HST
 - » Weekends and Holidays 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. HST

Will my employees qualify for UI benefits?

- The State of Hawaii UI Claims Office will make the decision on eligibility after they file their UI Claim.
- If they are experiencing any type of reduction in hours, we recommend they file for UI benefits so that eligibility can be determined.

What is considered gross wages?

- Salary, hourly wages, tips, commission, bonuses and any paid time off should all be reported to the UI Claims Office as part of their total gross wages when they file their weekly claim certification.
- Paid time off and tips should be reported in the week they are earned. Commission and bonuses should be reported in the week they are paid.

How much will my employee qualify for?

- The amount they qualify for in monetary compensation will be determined by the State of Hawaii after they file a claim. This is determined by gross wages they've earned in the past 18 months for any employer in Hawaii.
- The maximum weekly benefit amount for this year is \$648. If an employee continues to earn more than \$648 in gross wages, they will not qualify for UI benefits.

When will employees get paid?

- Payment will be on a weekly basis via direct deposit.
- Under normal circumstances, there is usually a 1 week delay in payment. However, due to the high volume of individuals filing for UI benefits, there may be an additional delay.

Some of my employees were working part-time. Will they qualify for UI benefits?

- Anyone experiencing a reduction in hours may be eligible for UI benefits. Eligibility is determined after an employee files for UI benefits. For this reason, we are recommending anyone experiencing a reduction of hours file for UI benefits.

If they don't qualify for UI benefits, will they be penalized for filing?

- No, there is no penalty for filing if they are not eligible.

Some of my employees worked more than one job. Can they choose which employer they want to file UI benefits for?

- No. All wages paid by any employer in the past 18 months is taken into consideration when they file a new claim.

After they finish opening a new claim online, what happens?

- The day after they complete the new filing, you (the employer) will receive a request from the State of Hawaii electronically to respond to the claim. It's important that you respond timely and accurately.

Who should my employee contact if they have general questions about their claim?

- It is important that they contact the UI office directly to ensure a timely response to any questions they may have. Employers do not have the ability to approve a claim or ensure that payments are issued. We've provided a list of UI offices and their phone numbers below:

| UI Claims Office | Phone | Fax | Email |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Honolulu Claims Office | (808) 586-8970 | (808) 586-8980 | dlir.ui.oahu@hawaii.gov |
| Hilo Claims Office | (808) 974-4086 | (808) 974-4085 | dlir.ui.hilo@hawaii.gov |
| Kauai Claims Office | (808) 274-3043 | (808) 274-3046 | dlir.ui.kauai@hawaii.gov |
| Kona Claims Office | (808) 322-4822 | (808) 322-4828 | dlir.ui.kona@hawaii.gov |
| Maui Claims Office | (808) 984-8400 | (808) 984-8444 | dlir.ui.maui@hawaii.gov |