

Introduction to Florida's Reemployment Assistance Process

Part 1 – Basic Facts and How to Qualify



There are no “unemployment offices” in the state of Florida that are open to the public.

Unemployment can only be contacted directly by phone or email – we will provide that info, but hopefully, after viewing our presentations, **you will never need it!**

There are 100 **CareerSource** centers across the state – we assist with **jobs** and **training**. We do not control unemployment. This is the first in a series of presentations that CareerSource Suncoast has created to share everything we know that can assist you in filing for unemployment in Florida.

The state of Florida now refers to unemployment as **Reemployment Assistance**.

Reemployment Assistance is:

- A **temporary, partial** wage replacement benefit for qualified workers who are unemployed **through no fault of their own**.
- Funded solely by **employers** who pay federal and state payroll taxes.

Reemployment Assistance **is not**:

- An automatic entitlement
- Based on need
- Intended to fully replace previous income
- Funded by any deductions from wages you have earned
- Recommended for those unprepared to reenter the workforce

Reemployment Assistance by the Numbers:

- As of 1/1/15, new claimants can receive Reemployment Assistance for no more than **14 weeks**. This is based on the seasonally adjusted average total unemployment rate in Florida.
- The maximum amount of weekly Reemployment Assistance which you can receive is **\$275 per week**.
- After 14 weeks, the state and federal governments no longer provide any additional benefits or “extensions”.

Remember, this is a temporary, partial wage replacement not intended to replace your previous income.

Will I qualify? You will not know for certain if you qualify, or for how much, until after applying online. Florida's Reemployment Assistance program will not tell you prior to applying, regardless of the situation.

A potential qualifying claimant is someone who:

- Has lost their job **through no fault of their own.**
- Is **actively looking** for a new job.
- Is **ready to take a new job** when offered.
- Meets **wage requirements** based on previous job(s) – see next slide.

What are the wage requirements?

Florida's Reemployment Assistance program will only look at your Florida earnings in the **base period** - this is the first four quarters of the previous five completed quarters prior to when you file the claim. The base period changes every three months at the beginning of each new quarter, starting in January, April, July and October.

Base Period Chart												
Year Preceding Prior Year	Prior Year				Current Year							
July	Oct.	Jan.	April	July	Oct.	Jan.	April	July	Oct.			
Aug.	Nov.	Feb.	May	Aug.	Nov.	Feb.	May	Aug.	Nov.			
Sept.	Dec.	March	June	Sept.	Dec.	March	June	Sept.	Dec.			
	Base Period (Oct. 1 – Sept. 30) ←				Claim Filed							
		Base Period (Jan. 1 – Dec. 31) ←				Claim Filed						
			Base Period (Apr. 1 – Mar. 31) ←				Claim Filed					
				Base Period (July 1 – June 30) ←				Claim Filed				

Base period requirements (cont'd):

- Have been paid wages in two or more calendar quarters in the base period (see previous slide for how quarters are divided)
- Have total base period wages of at least 1.5 times the wages in the quarter having the highest earnings
- Have at least **\$3,400** total wages in the base period

When should I apply, or “file” for Reemployment Assistance?

Immediately after you become unemployed.

Can my claim be backdated to when I became unemployed?

No. By law your claim is effective the week in which you file your claim.

What happens if I do not file my claim immediately after I become unemployed?

- You may qualify for less benefits.
- You will not receive benefits for the weeks before you filed your claim.

The rest of this module deals with special qualifying cases. If none of the below apply to you, skip to Part 2.

Keep reading if any of the following apply:

- **Received a severance package**
- **Worked in another state**
- **Served in the military**
- **Worked for the federal government**
- **Are attending postsecondary school (anything past high school or GED programs)**

If your last employer gave you a severance package:

Benefit payments will begin when your severance pay per week is less than the weekly benefit amount for which you qualify.

If you received a lump sum, divide it by your average weekly wage to determine the number of weeks of the severance.

There is no reduction in the amount of total benefits (credits) that can be paid on your claim. For example, if you are determined eligible for \$3,200 of available benefits (credits), you will still be eligible for that same amount unless your benefit year expires before you exhaust that total.

If you worked in another state:

File a claim with Florida if you:

- Live in Florida and worked in Florida during the base period of your claim.
- Live in Florida and did not work during the past 18 months, but need a determination stating that you are ineligible to receive unemployment benefits.
- Live in another state now but worked in Florida during the base period of your claim.

File your claim against another state if you:

- Live in another state and during the last 18 months you worked in that state only.
- Live in another state and during the last 18 months you worked in more than one state.

To file a claim against another state: <http://www.servicelocator.org/OWSLinks.asp>

Choose the state in which you worked and follow the instructions. Most states take out-of-state claims by phone or internet or both.

If that state does not take claims by phone or internet from individuals living out of state, you must file your initial claim with Florida; after that, you will communicate directly with the other state and all determinations and payments will be issued by that state.

If you served in the military:

- Thank you for your service! If you are filing your first claim since leaving the military, the claim must be filed with the state in which you are physically located at the time. You do not have to be living in that state permanently to file a claim against that state.
- If this is not your first claim since leaving the military, file your claim with the state in which you are currently living. If you need to file with another state, they will indicate that.

If you worked for the federal government:

File your claim with the state in which you are currently living. They will review your work history and will advise if you need to file with another state.

If you are attending school (post-high school / GED):

The state reviews these requests on a **case-by-case basis**, based on criteria such as:

- Is the training authorized by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)?
- Is it designed to prepare you for gainful employment?
- Is there a reasonable expectation that you will be employable upon completing the training?

The complete list of criteria can be viewed at FLrules.org –search for Rule 73B-11.022.