

WE ARE YOUR DOL



Department  
of Labor

## WORK SEARCH REQUIREMENTS FAQs

### DO I HAVE TO LOOK FOR WORK WHILE COLLECTING BENEFITS?

Yes. To be eligible for benefits you must:

- Be actively looking for work while claiming Unemployment Insurance benefits.
- Keep a Work Search Record for each week you claim benefits and be prepared to give a copy of that Record to the New York State Department of Labor when we request it.

### WHAT IS A WORK SEARCH RECORD?

New York State regulations require you to keep an online or written Work Search Record for each week you claim benefits and be prepared to give a copy of that record to the Department of Labor if we ask for it. The record must include dates, names, addresses (mail, email, or web address) and telephone numbers of employers contacted, names and/or job titles of specific people contacted, contact methods used, position or job title applied for or a description of other work search efforts (attending job fairs or workshops, etc.). We will check the information on the form with the contacts listed. **According to the regulations, if you knowingly give us false statements about your work search activities it is considered fraud, and we can deny you Unemployment Insurance benefits.**

If you choose to keep your record online, you must use our JobZone website. It provides one place where you can safely update and store all of your work search records in a secure electronic file safe from fire, theft or accidental loss. To access your JobZone account, simply click on the JobZone work search record link provided when you claim weekly benefits online. If you have questions about establishing your account, please contact your local Career Center.

If you do not use the online Work Search Record in JobZone, we recommend you keep a record of your work search activities each week using the Work Search Record form included in the Claimant Handbook. You can also keep a similar written record instead of the Work

Search Record form if it includes the required information. Whatever written format you choose, include supporting documentation. For example, if you apply for a job online, print a copy of the application or the employer's acknowledgement of the application. If you send a resume or application by email, save a printed copy of all correspondence. You should also keep a copy of your sent mail log or the employer's acknowledgement of the resume or application. Other examples of documentation include printouts from online search efforts, a job fair employer list, a prospective employer's business card, etc.

You can get more Work Search Record forms at your local Career Center, online, or in the back of the Claimant Handbook.

### WILL MY WORK SEARCH RECORD BE VERIFIED?

Yes. We will verify the information you provide with the contacts you list. According to New York State regulations, if you knowingly give us false information about your work search activities, it is considered fraud and can lead to severe penalties.

### HOW MANY EMPLOYERS MUST I CONTACT EACH WEEK?

You must do at least **three** work search activities each week, although you are encouraged to do more. **These three activities must be done on different days of the week.** They must include at least one activity from Work Search Activities 1-5 (below). Two more activities must be completed and may be selected from the nine activities listed, unless you have a Work Search Plan approved by the Department of Labor that indicates otherwise.

## WHAT ARE WORK SEARCH ACTIVITIES?

You must do at least three work search activities each week, although you are encouraged to do more. These three activities must be done on different days of the week. They must include at least one activity from numbers 1 - 5. Two more activities must be completed and may be selected from below:

1. Using employment resources available through NYS DOL, such as:
  - Phone meeting with Career Center advisors
  - Getting information from Career Center staff about jobs that may be available in a particular industry or region
  - Working with Career Center staff to assess your skills and match them to possible occupations and jobs
  - Participating in virtual workshops
  - Getting job referrals and job matches from the Career Center and following up with employers
2. Visiting a job site and completing a job application in person with employers who has job openings
3. Submitting a job application and/or resume in response to a public notice or want ad or to employers with job openings
4. Attending job search seminars, scheduled career networking meetings, job fairs or employment-related workshops that offer instruction to improve job-hunting skills
5. Interviewing with possible employers
6. Applying for employment with former employer(s)
7. Registering with and checking in with private employment agencies, placement services, unions and placement offices of schools, colleges or universities and/or professional organizations
8. Using the telephone, business directories, internet or online job-matching systems to search for jobs, get leads, request referrals or make appointments for job interviews
9. Applying and/or registering for and taking Civil Service examination(s) for government job openings

## DO I HAVE TO KEEP MY WORK SEARCH RECORDS?

Yes. If you keep your work search record online at <https://www.jobzone.ny.gov/>, your work search record will be stored online automatically. JobZone is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It provides one place to safely update and store all of your work search records in a secure electronic file safe from fire or accidental loss. You can also use JobZone to search for jobs, write your resume and cover letters, explore career options, compare salaries and more.

If you choose to keep a paper Work Search Record, you must keep copies for one year. Do not send your Work Search Record to the Department of Labor unless we ask you to. You can get more forms at your local Career Center, online or in your claimant handbook.

If you have an Unemployment Insurance Work Search Plan approved by the Department of Labor, you must do what was agreed upon in the plan and record those activities on the Work Search Record. We will check your Work Search Record to be sure you are doing what is called for in your Work Search Plan.

## WHAT KIND OF WORK MUST I ACCEPT?

You must be ready to accept “suitable” work while you collect benefits. Suitable work is work that you can reasonably do through your past training and experience. This means that you have to look for work in all your most recent occupations, especially if the chance of getting work in your primary skill area is not good. After you have claimed 10 full weeks of benefits, suitable work also includes:

- Any work that you can do, even if you have no experience or training in such work, unless you are hired through a union hiring hall or have a definite date to return to work.
- Such work must pay at least 80% of your high-quarter base-period wages. Any work offered must pay the prevailing wage for such work.
- You must also be willing to travel a reasonable distance to get work. As a rule, we consider a reasonable distance to be travel of:
  - One hour by private transportation or
  - One and one-half hours by public transportation.

## WHO IS EXEMPT FROM WORK SEARCH?

The Department of Labor will tell you if you are exempt from the work search requirements. You may be exempt if you are:

- Temporarily laid off or seasonally employed and have a definite return-to-work date of four weeks or less.
- A union member who must obtain work through the union hiring hall. You must comply with your union’s membership and work search requirements.
- Participating in a training program approved by the Department of Labor, such as those approved under New York State Labor Law §599.
- Serving on a jury.
- Participating in a Department of Labor-approved Shared Work Program.
- Participating in a Department of Labor-approved Self Employment Assistance Program.
- Covered by any exemption required by state or federal law.