

# Top 10 Things You Should Know . . .

## About the Unemployment Insurance System When Filing Your Claim



Unemployment Insurance (UI) provides temporary financial assistance to qualified individuals who have lost their jobs through no fault of their own and who continue to meet eligibility requirements of state law.

The program is not a right to all who have lost their job.

Keep these top ten key facts in mind when you are filing for UI benefits to ensure accurate and quick payment of benefits.

For more information, please contact your local claims office at <http://hawaii.gov/lab/or/ui/ui/hawaii-office-locations-1>. We're here to help.

- 1. Accurately Report the Reason You Are Unemployed.** Accurately report your reason for separation from your job when you initially file your claim for benefits. It is important that you provide the UI office with the precise reason for your separation so that we can best assist you and help you to avoid fraud.
- 2. Report Any Wages You Are Earning.** You must report your gross wages (before your taxes are taken out) for each week you work and certify for benefits, even if you don't get paid for it until later. Be sure to accurately report all your earnings during the week you work on your weekly claim certification – even those from part-time or temporary work. If you collect more UI benefits than you are eligible for because you fail to report earnings, you may be committing fraud and may be prosecuted.
- 3. Register with the State Workforce Development Division (WDD).** Unless you are exempt by law, such as claimants who are members of an approved job referring union or on “partial” claim status, the vast majority of people must register with the WDD to be eligible to collect UI benefits. You must register and post your resume online in HireNet Hawaii, the web-based job matching system used by the WDD. If you are not required to register, you still may seek help in finding a job from the WDD. The WDD provides valuable resources that are available for your use, including job referrals, resume building and re-employment services.
- 4. Be Available for Work.** In order to collect benefits, you must continually verify that you are able, available and willing to accept suitable work. Possible conflicts like attending school during work hours or limitations with child care or transportation could limit your work availability and

be an eligibility issue. Report such issues when you file your weekly or bi-weekly claim certifications.

- 5. Actively Search for Work.** You must search for work each week that you file a claim for benefits. If you do not make 3 job contacts during a week in which you file a claim, benefits may be denied. You must also keep a record of your job contacts and submit it upon request.
- 6. Develop an Effective Work Search Plan.** Many unemployed individuals do not have an effective plan for searching for work. The WDD is a great place to learn about different kinds of jobs, their availability, and how to get training. Contact the WDD for more information and assistance with planning an effective work search.
- 7. Avoid Errors and Ensure Proper Payment of Benefits.** To prevent errors in payment of UI benefits that may result in an overpayment, it is important that you read all of the information that is provided to you when you file your claim for benefits. Improper payment of benefits will cause a delay or denial of future benefits.
- 8. Don't Delay – As Soon As You Begin Working Again, Report Your Return to Work.** As soon as you begin working, be sure to report that information when you file your claim certification. Do not wait until you receive your first paycheck to report your return to work. The UI Division uses state and national resources to track new hires, so it is in your best interest to report your return to work immediately to avoid the serious consequences of an improper payment. If you return to work full-time, you should stop filing as you are no longer eligible for benefits.
- 9. Follow the Rules to Prevent Yourself from Committing Fraud.** Anyone who collects UI benefits is legally responsible for making sure he or she follows the requirements set by state law. Failure to follow the rules can result in serious consequences. Consequences for not following UI regulations can include prosecution by government authorities, repaying the benefits with penalties, forfeiting a future income tax refund, losing future eligibility to collect UI benefits and a possible jail sentence.
- 10. Know Your Responsibilities and Ask for Help.** As a recipient of unemployment insurance benefits, you have a legal responsibility to know and follow all rules and reporting requirements. Navigating through the UI system can be confusing. If you have a question about your responsibilities or the requirements of receiving benefits, your local claims office is here to help.