



## **Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA)**

### **Fact Sheet**

#### **What is Disaster Unemployment Assistance?**

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) is a federal program that provides unemployment payments to individuals who become unemployed as a direct result of a disaster.

#### **Who is eligible to receive Disaster Unemployment Assistance?**

To be eligible for DUA, individuals must be ineligible to receive federal or state unemployment compensation.

Also, individuals must apply for DUA within thirty (30) days from the date a county is declared a disaster. Individuals also must meet one or more of the following conditions:

1. Unemployed as a direct result of a major disaster;
2. Scheduled to start employment, but were unable to as a direct result of a major disaster;
3. Unable to reach the job site or self-employment location because you have to travel through an affected area and are prevented from doing so;
4. Individuals who become the major support for a household because of the death of the head of the household due to the disaster; or
5. Individuals who are unable to work or perform services due to an injury caused as a direct result of a disaster.

#### **What counties are currently eligible for DUA assistance?**

The twenty-four (24) counties currently included in the declaration for Individual Assistance are eligible for DUA. To date, these counties are Bamberg, Berkeley, Calhoun, Charleston, Clarendon, Colleton, Darlington, Dorchester, Fairfield, Florence, Georgetown, Greenville, Greenwood, Horry, Kershaw, Lee, Lexington, Marion, Newberry, Orangeburg, Richland, Spartanburg, Sumter, and Williamsburg.

**Are business owners and contract employees, who are exempt from regular unemployment coverage, eligible for DUA?**

Yes. Small business owners and the self-employed, who are exempt from regular unemployment, may be eligible for DUA provided they meet all other eligibility requirements.

**How long is DUA available?**

DUA is available only during the designated disaster assistance period. However, individuals must apply for DUA within thirty (30) days from the date a county is declared a disaster.

Ordinarily, the disaster assistance period lasts twenty-six (26) weeks starting with the first full week after the disaster start date as listed in the President's Disaster Declaration. An eligible individual would be entitled to receive DUA benefits each week during the DUA period as long as they remain unemployed as a direct result of the disaster and meet standard state weekly eligibility requirements.

**How do I apply for DUA benefits?**

You must first file a claim for state unemployment benefits by visiting <https://mybenefits.dew.sc.gov> or by calling 1-866-831-1724.

If individuals are eligible for state unemployment benefits, they must first exhaust those benefits before receiving DUA. If they are ineligible for state unemployment benefits, they will be contacted by a DEW representative.

**What information is needed to apply for DUA benefits?**

Within twenty-one (21) calendar days of applying for DUA benefits, DEW must receive confirmation that an individual is either:

1. Working or self-employed at the time of the disaster; or
2. Scheduled to start work on or after the date of the disaster.

If proof of employment is not provided by the deadline, DEW will stop paying DUA benefits and any payment received will have to be repaid.

Additionally, DEW must receive proof of wages and/or income for the most recently completed tax year. In some cases, DEW will already have this

information and no further information will be necessary. Please note that weekly benefit amounts may be reduced for failure to provide DEW with proof of all wages.

Mail or fax proof of employment and wages to DEW at:

South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce  
Attn: TPU/DUA  
PO Box 1477  
Columbia, SC 29202

Fax: 803-737-2814

**Do I have to do my required work searches in order to receive DUA benefits?**

Yes, individuals must perform the required four (4) work searches for the weeks in which they are receiving DUA benefits.

**What is an acceptable proof of employment?**

Acceptable documents to prove employment at the time of the disaster include, but are not limited to:

1. Pay stub or voucher;
2. Earnings statement; or
3. Written statement from your employer.

**What is acceptable proof of self-employment?**

To prove self-employment, provide DEW with all of the following three (3) items:

1. Federal income tax form 1040;
2. Schedule C, F, or SE federal income tax returns for the most recent tax year; and
3. One of the following to prove the existence of the business:
  - a. Property titles, deeds, or rental agreement for the place of business;
  - b. Recent business bank, phone, utility statement, or insurance bill; or
  - c. Recent sales tax return.

### **What is acceptable proof of prospective employment?**

To prove prospective employment, individuals must provide DEW with a completed form DUA-7 or a letter from the potential employer that includes all of the following information:

1. Name and address of the employer;
2. Employer contact name and number;
3. Employer federal FEIN and DEW UI Account number;
4. Start date of the job;
5. House of the job;
6. Duration of the job; and
7. Reason why you did not start work.

### **What is acceptable proof of prospective self-employment?**

To prove prospective self-employment, individuals must provide DEW with one of the following:

1. Property titles or deeds for the place of business;
2. A contract showing that you were about to begin self-employment work.
3. Rental agreement or letter from a property owner showing you planned to open a business at the time of the disaster; or
4. Other evidence that you were preparing to open a business, such as advertising or state tax registration.

### **How much money can an individual receive each week under DUA?**

Weekly benefit amounts for DUA benefits is based on wages earned during the most recently completed tax year.

The weekly benefit amount is computed in the same manner as it is under state unemployment compensation, except that the minimum weekly benefit amount under DUA is \$127. The maximum amount is \$326.

An individual's weekly benefit amount may be reduced if he or she receives any of the following during a week that he or she files for DUA benefits:

1. Benefits or insurance for loss of wages due to illness or disability;
2. Supplemental unemployment benefits paid pursuant to a collective bargaining agreement;
3. Private income protection insurance;

4. Workers' Compensation or survivor's benefits if he or she becomes the major support of the family as a result of the death of the head of the household because of the disaster;
5. Retirement pension or annuity;
6. Subsidy or price support payments, crop insurance payments, and farm disaster relief (non-DUA) payments;
7. A court order to pay child support;
8. Earnings from employment or self-employment.

### **Can a customer file an extension on DUA benefits?**

No. DUA benefits are for people who do not have the option of receiving another form of unemployment compensation. Extensions are not available for DUA claims.

### **What are the requirements for reporting wages?**

Individuals who are not self-employed and work during a week in which they requested DUA benefits, must report their hours and gross earnings.

Self-employed individuals must report all wages during the week in which they were paid, not when the work was performed.

Please note, failure to properly report all gross earnings may result in an overpayment that must be repaid. Additionally, knowingly giving false information or withholding information to obtain or increase unemployment benefits is fraud, which could result in a fine and jail time.

### **What are the ongoing eligibility requirements?**

DUA eligibility requirements are similar to the eligibility requirements for state unemployment compensation. To receive DUA benefits for a week, you must:

1. Be unemployed as a direct result of the disaster;
2. Be legally authorized to work in the United States;
3. Be able to work and available for work;
4. Actively search for work (or actively engage in resuming your customary self-employment);
5. Submit timely requests for DUA payment; and
6. Have not refused an offer or referral of suitable work.

### **How do I file an appeal?**

DEW will issue determinations regarding eligibility for DUA benefits. If there is a discrepancy with a determination, mail or fax a written appeal no later than sixty (60) calendar days from the date DEW mailed the determination. DEW uses the postmark on the mailed appeal or the fax date on the appeal letter (or the date DEW received the fax, if there is no fax date) to determine whether the appeal is timely. Go to [www.dew.sc.gov](http://www.dew.sc.gov) and download form APP-100 or draft a letter to submit an appeal.

Mail or fax your appeal to:

South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce  
Attn: Appeal Tribunal  
PO Box 995  
Columbia, SC 29202

Fax: 803-737-0287

Individuals must continue to request DUA payments each week as necessary while waiting for the result of the appeal. If DEW's decision is overturned on appeal, payments will be made only for the weeks a request for payment is made.