

POLICY GUIDANCE
WORK SEARCH EXEMPTION

10-Week Work Search Exemption Due to COVID-19

10-Week Work Search Exemption in Brief

- Who is eligible – All current and new UI benefit recipients.
- How long are claimants exempt – 10 weeks from 1st claim certification filed on or after the week ending March 21st, 2020.
- How long will we provide exemption – 30 days after end of state of emergency.

Policy Description

Due to the state of emergency proclaimed by the Governor of Maryland, and the labor conditions across the state of Maryland, the Secretary of the Maryland Department of Labor (Secretary) ordered, effective March 20th, 2020, a temporary exemption from the work search requirement for individuals receiving unemployment insurance benefits.

The Division will exempt all current and new unemployment insurance (UI) benefit recipients from the requirement to actively seek work for a ten (10) week period. *See generally*, MD Labor & Employment Law Article § 8-904. The temporary exemption from the work search requirement will begin the week ending on March 21st, 2020. This temporary exemption applies to all claimants collecting UI benefits, not just those recently separated from their employment as a result of the COVID-19 Pandemic. For example, if a claimant was receiving UI benefits prior to the Secretary's order, then the claimant's 1st week of the exemption is the week ending March 21st, 2020. Otherwise, the claimant's first week of exemption is the first week that they file a claim certification. To put this exemption into effect, please code claims as a Special Exemption using JCR5.

See the chart below for examples of work search exemption start and end dates:

Claim Certification Filed	Exemption End Date
Week Ending: 03/21/20	Week Ending: 05/30/20
Week Ending: 03/28/20	Week Ending: 06/06/20
Week Ending: 04/04/20	Week Ending: 06/13/20

In the event that the state of emergency is still in effect when the 10-week period ends, the Division, in conjunction with the Secretary, will revisit the order for a possible extension of the work search exemption. The exemption will apply to all claimants who apply for and are eligible for benefits up to thirty (30) days after the end of the state of emergency. If a claimant become eligible for benefits between 1 - 30 days after the state of emergency is lifted, they will still be exempted from the work search requirement for 10 weeks.

During their exemption period, claimants may still be selected for a reemployment session with a RESEA facilitator. Claimants will be required to complete that session, which will take place one-on-one over the phone. During the session, the claimant and the facilitator will develop an individual reemployment plan (IRP), but the claimant will not be required to perform the actions in the plan until the state of emergency has ended. Additionally, all claimants are strongly encouraged to engage in Maryland's approved list of Self-Service Reemployment activities that can be completed virtually via our [MWE-REX](#) system:

1. Self-Service Labor Market Research
2. Skills Self-Assessment
3. Outside Web-Linked Job Referral (e.g., Career Builder, Indeed, LinkedIn)
4. Networking Events conducted in REX
5. Completion of Training Courses in ALISON-REX
6. Attending a Calendar Event posted in MWE-REX
7. Virtual Recruiter
8. Register for Work with a Private Employment Agency or Placement Facility of a School, College, or University

On the next page are the Work Search Exemption Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) that are published on the Division's home page. If you receive questions from claimants that you believe you should be included in the FAQ, or otherwise have suggestions for additional questions and answers for the FAQ, please provide them to your Claims Center Director or Adjudication Administrator.

More Questions?

If you have questions about this guidance, or require clarification, please contact the Policy & Communications Unit at UI.Policy@maryland.gov.

MARYLAND'S DIVISION OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE
QUESTIONS & ANSWERS
EXEMPTION FROM THE WEEKLY WORK SEARCH REQUIREMENT

1. Am I required to search for work during this state of emergency?

The Maryland Secretary of Labor has ordered, effective March 20th, 2020, a ten (10) week exemption from the requirement that claimants actively seek work every week in order to be eligible for benefits. Labor is temporarily waiving the work search requirements for all current and new unemployment insurance benefit recipients. This exemption will apply to individuals who become eligible to receive unemployment insurance benefits no later than thirty (30) days after the termination of the state of emergency.

Claimants who are selected to participate in a federally-required reemployment workshop during this period will be required to complete a one-on-one telephone session with a RESEA facilitator to develop an individual reemployment plan (IRP). The claimant will not be required to complete the duties detailed in their IRP until the state of emergency has been lifted.

2. I began receiving benefits before the order exempting the work search requirement was issued. Do I have to perform a work search each week?

If you are currently receiving unemployment insurance benefits, you will be exempted from completing the weekly work search requirement for ten (10) weeks, beginning the week of March 20th, 2020.

3. I have been selected to participate in a reemployment workshop. Am I exempt from participating in the workshop during the state of emergency?

If you are selected to participate in a reemployment workshop during the state of emergency, you will be scheduled to complete a one-on-one telephone session with a Re-Employment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) facilitator. During the one-on-one telephone session, you will work with the RESEA facilitator to develop an individual reemployment plan (IRP). However, you will not be required to complete the activities detailed in your IRP until the state of emergency has been lifted.

4. Although I am not required to search for work during the state of emergency, are there steps that I can take to increase my likelihood of getting reemployed once the labor market improves?

Yes! The Division of Unemployment Insurance encourages you to complete any of the activities listed below which can be done online at the [Maryland Workforce Exchange](#). By completing these activities, you can maintain and increase your skills and training and position yourself to be hired quickly when the labor market stabilizes and businesses are hiring again.

Self-Service Reemployment Activities that you can perform virtually in [MWE-REX](#):

1. Self-Service Labor Market Research
2. Skills Self-Assessment
3. Outside Web-Linked Job Referral (e.g., Career Builder, Indeed, LinkedIn)
4. Networking Events conducted in REX
5. Completion of Training Courses in ALISON-REX
6. Attending a Calendar Event posted in MWE-REX
7. Virtual Recruiter
8. Register for Work with a Private Employment Agency or Placement Facility of a School, College, or University