

UI Claimants Can Document Their Efforts Virtually and Through Skills Enhancement

AUSTIN – The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) announced today that as the Texas economy continues to open TWC will reinstate state work search requirements, which had been suspended since March, but will resume on November 1, 2020. Work search is a federal requirement to receive unemployment benefits. Individuals will continue to receive benefits but must show an active effort to obtain new employment. A wide variety of activities qualify as a work search, see below for more information.

All individuals receiving unemployment benefits will need to complete the designated number of work searches, beginning on the date listed in their work search notification document. The work search notification document can be found in their correspondence inbox at ui.texasworkforce.org or U.S. Postal Mailbox. For example, individuals with an initial or additional claim the week of November 1st – work search activities would be effective the week beginning November 8th. For individuals with existing claims requesting payment the week of November 1st, work search activities would be effective the week beginning November 15. TWC encourages all claimants to refer to their work search notification document.

“The COVID-19 crisis has been difficult for everyone, creating new challenges for workers, employers and their families,” said TWC Executive Director Ed Serna. “Let me be clear: we are not over it. But we’re seeing employment opportunities begin to bounce back in Texas as our economy restarts. There are opportunities out there and getting Texans back to work and businesses up and running again will create even more.”

Texas businesses are hiring right now. There are approximately over 695,000 jobs available in Texas on WorkInTexas.com, the state’s online jobs portal, in addition to jobs available elsewhere. As more and more businesses come back online, those numbers should increase.

Unemployment insurance benefits are not intended as a replacement for a job, but a temporary benefit to help workers until they can resume employment. The work search requirement does not mean workers must take the first job available. It means that they must show an active effort to obtain new employment to continue benefits. As long as they do this, their benefits will continue for as long as they are eligible.

Furloughed workers with a definite return to work date that is within 12 weeks of the layoff are exempt from work search requirements. Return to work dates beyond 12 weeks can result in the waiver of work search at the discretion of TWC. While Self-employed individuals who intend to reopen their business do not need to complete work search activities. They do need to take steps to reopen their business. Self-employed individuals who do not intend to reopen their business will need to complete work search activities.

What counts as a work search activity?

TWC has determined that acceptable work search activities include, but are not limited to:

- registering on WorkInTexas.com. For help with the registration process, go to WorkInTexas.com, scroll down to the “News and Announcements” section, and select “[Registration Resources and Website Usage Tips](#).” For support, contact your local [Workforce Solutions Office](#)
- searching for jobs on WorkInTexas.com and using the Virtual Recruiter tool to receive alerts about new jobs that match your skills
- obtaining and following up on job contacts from WorkInTexas.com or [Workforce Solutions office](#) staff
- registering at a [public workforce office](#) in the state you live in if you do not live or work in Texas
- registering for work with a private employment agency, placement service of a school/college/university, or registering with other electronic job-matching systems (does not replace WorkInTexas.com registration)
- making in-person visits, completing a job application, or interviewing with employers who may reasonably be expected to have openings for suitable work. The job application can be submitted in person, online, by fax, or in any other manner directed by the employer and appropriate for the type of work being sought
- mailing a job application and/or a résumé as instructed by a public job notice
- creating a reemployment plan
- creating or uploading a résumé to online job boards
- participating in work-related networking events such as job clubs or job fairs, or employment-related workshops that offer instruction in improving the job seeker’s skills for obtaining employment
- taking advantage of reemployment services and resources available at your nearest [Workforce Solutions office](#) virtually. For more details, contact your local Workforce Solutions office. Reemployment resources include:
 - obtaining and using labor market information
 - participating in reemployment services designed for job seekers
 - participating in skills assessments for occupational matching
 - participating in instructional workshops, such as résumé preparation and enhancement, job-search techniques, and interviewing skills
 - a Metrix course that is completed with a passing score can be one of your work search activities
 - participating in targeted training opportunities designed to improve skills

What resources are available to help individuals search for work?

TWC has over 180 workforce solutions offices around the state ready to assist claimants with everything from resume writing to job searching. TWC has partnered with Metrix Learning to offer over 5,000 online courses free to all Texans. These courses count as work search activities. Individuals wishing to sign up can do so through their WorkInTexas.com account. Additionally, Job seekers are encouraged to visit WorkInTexas.com, the state’s job portal, for access to hundreds of thousands of public and private sector jobs, as well as links to education and training opportunities, resume assistance and other resources.

How do claimants submit proof of work search to TWC?

Claimants do not need to regularly submit proof of work search. During their payment requests they will be asked to certify that they completed work search requirements for the request period. TWC may occasionally ask claimants for a record of their activity. Claimants must keep a detailed log of their activity recording the date and details of the work search. TWC can request this activity log anytime during their benefit year.

Do Self-Employed individuals need to complete work search activity?

Self-Employed PUA claimants are required to undertake work activities to resume their business and must certify this when requesting payment for unemployment benefits bi-weekly. If the business will not reopen, Self-Employed PUA claimants are required to perform work search activities, meet the minimum number of weekly work search activities, and apply for jobs suitable to their skills and talents. They also have a resume waiting for their completion in WorkInTexas.com, the opportunity to apply for work through WorkInTexas.com, and have the same resources available to them as other job seekers through Workforce Solutions offices.

Do Furloughed workers need to complete work search activity?

Claimants who believe they are in temporary layoff status should contact their employer regarding their return to work date. If they do not receive a definite return to work date, they should plan to search for full-time work and adhere to work search requirements when reinstated. Claimants directed to return to work by their employer must do so immediately.