

INFORMATION FOR FURLOUGHED FEDERAL WORKERS: UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION FOR FEDERAL EMPLOYEES (UCFE)

While on furlough, Federal employees may become eligible for unemployment benefits under the Unemployment Compensation for Federal Employees (UCFE) program. UCFE is paid by the states under the same terms and conditions as regular state unemployment compensation (UC). You will need to contact the state of your last duty station to file an UCFE claim. To qualify for benefits, you must have earned sufficient wages during the prior 12–18 months, as determined under the state UC law. The state will advise you of whether or not you are eligible for benefits.

Be Prepared

It is important to have certain key documents ready when you file your claim. States may take claims over the Internet, telephone, or in-person. Follow instructions provided on the state's Web site. Information on where and how to file can be found on the U.S Department of Labor Web site at www.dol.gov.

You will need to know your department or agency's correct name and payroll address, and, if available, the agency's Federal Identification Code (FIC). The FIC for USDA is **445**. The Documents that have this information and will help you to correctly file your UCFE claim include:

- Standard Form 8 (SF-8)
- Standard Form 50 (SF-50)
- Earnings and Leave Statement
- W-2 Form

In most states, workers who are otherwise eligible for benefits must first serve a one-week waiting period. You will have to check with the state in which you file your claim for specific information. Generally, this means that you will not be paid for your first week of unemployment.

Once you file your UCFE claim, you will have to file eligibility certifications weekly or bi-weekly. Most states accept these weekly certifications via a telephone interactive voice response system or the Internet. To be eligible in most states you must be able and available for work. You will be provided information on how to file your weekly certification at the time you file your claim. Depending on state law, furloughed workers may not be required to actively search for work because you are on a temporary lay-off.

Consequences of Dual Payments

If you work and earn wages (during the same period that you may also have a furlough day(s)), and you file a UCFE claim for the same weeks, you must report your earnings. Depending upon how much you earn, your weekly UC amount may be reduced (in some cases, it may be reduced to zero). If you fail to report earnings, you may be determined to have been overpaid these benefits and required to repay the state. If that happens, the state will issue an overpayment notice to you and it will contain appeal rights. You have the right to file an appeal if you disagree with the

determination. State law governs the time period in which that appeal must be filed. In addition, if the Federal government retroactively pays Federal employees for the period of the furlough, any UCFE benefits received with respect to that period may be subject to repayment depending on state law.

Some states may increase normal working hours in order to process the high volume of UCFE claims, if necessary. Check your state's web site for hours of operation. Some Internet filing may be available 24/7. Note that states will need to request wage information from the Federal government to file claims. This may cause a slight delay and you may receive an initial determination that shows no wages.

You should expect longer than normal wait times due to the large volume of UCFE claims that may be filed. Please be patient, states will be doing all they can to accommodate you and to help you correctly file your claim. Generally, eligible individuals may expect to receive their first benefit payment within 14-21 days from the date that the claim is filed claim.

Taxable Income

Unemployment compensation you receive under the unemployment compensation laws of the United States, or under a state law, is taxable income. If you receive unemployment compensation, you will be sent Form 1099-G from the state where you filed your claim showing the amount you were paid and any federal income tax you elected to have withheld. For more information, see Publication 525, Taxable and Nontaxable Income on the IRS Web site at: www.irs.gov.