

Unemployment & Benefits Navigation

Filing for unemployment and accessing support benefits can feel confusing. This toolkit offers clear guidance on how to navigate the process and make the most of available resources.

1. Filing for Unemployment

- Apply as soon as you're eligible — delays may impact benefits.
- For Virginia: visit <https://www.vec.virginia.gov/unemployed>
- For DC: visit <https://does.dc.gov/service/unemployment-compensation>
- Be prepared to provide employment history and reason for job separation.
- File weekly claims to maintain benefits.

2. What You May Qualify For

- State unemployment benefits (duration and amount vary by state).
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program).
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).
- Utility assistance or rent relief programs.
- Health coverage through Healthcare.gov or Medicaid.

3. Tips for Managing the Process

- Keep a folder or digital file of all correspondence and documents.
- Read all letters/emails carefully — respond to requests promptly.
- Track weekly job search activities (some states require proof).
- Check your spam folder — emails from agencies may be flagged.

4. Where to Get Help

- ****Legal Aid of DC or Virginia**** – Assistance with denied claims or appeals.

- ****United Way 211**** – Call 211 or visit 211.org for local assistance.
- ****CareerOneStop**** – Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Labor: www.careeronestop.org
- ****SHRM VA & DC Volunteers**** – Reach out for help interpreting instructions or gathering documents.