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EMPLOYEE UNEMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

Eligibility Requirements Benefits

[Eligibility for Unemployment Benefits | Missouri Department of Labor and Industrial Relations](#)

If you are laid off, you can still file for unemployment, your employer's failure to pay unemployment taxes is usually a problem for the employer, not a bar to your eligibility if you otherwise are qualified.

Undocumented or unauthorized workers cannot collect unemployment benefits in Missouri because they would not be eligible. Federal law requires valid work authorization during both the base period, and Missouri follows this rule through the Division of Employment Security (DES).

DES verifies immigration status via computer matching during claims, applicants without valid authorization (e.g., no Social Security Number tied to work permit) are ineligible. Missouri statutes explicitly bar unlawfully present aliens from state benefits like Unemployment Insurance (UI).

Eligibility Exceptions

Certain immigrants with work permits (e.g., asylees, TPS, DACA during validity) may qualify if wages meet base period minimums, Employers face penalties for knowingly hiring unauthorized workers.

Key points:

- You qualify based on wages from an insured employer, your separation reason (layoff/no fault), and other eligibility rules (work search, able/available, etc.).
- Whether the employer actually paid all required unemployment taxes does not normally erase your wage credits or block you from filing a claim; agencies can establish liability and collect from the employer separately.



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- If wages were never reported, the state may have to investigate, request proof of your earnings and add those wages to your record before benefits are calculated, which can slow things down but does not automatically disqualify you. **It is a good idea for you as the employee / worker to maintain proof of your wages (i.e., copies of payroll checks, pay stubs, W-2s, offer letters, time sheets, etc.). Do not rely on your employer to maintain such records, especially if the employer misclassified you as an independent contractor.**
- Employers who fail to pay or who misrepresent information to prevent or reduce benefits can face penalties, including fines and even misdemeanor charges in Missouri.