

## **RAPID RESPONSE: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

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For answers to your questions regarding the Unemployment Insurance program, please visit **[www.GetKansasBenefits.gov](http://www.GetKansasBenefits.gov)**. If you have additional questions that are not answered on this website, please call the Kansas Unemployment Contact Center at one of the following numbers:

### **Kansas Unemployment Contact Center**

Kansas City Area ..... (913) 596-3500  
Topeka Area ..... (785) 575-1460  
Wichita Area ..... (316) 383-9947  
Toll free ..... (800) 292-6333

### **How much time am I required to spend looking for work each week?**

You are required to look for work each week you file a claim for unemployment benefits. You must perform three work search activities each week in order to maintain your eligibility for unemployment benefits. Two of those work search activities each week must be an application for employment or submission of a résumé. Other activities could include additional job applications, attendance at job fairs, résumé review courses, Workforce Center services, browsing job posting websites, etc. We recommend that you keep a written record of your work search activities. We may ask you to provide the details of your work search to ensure you are meeting all eligibility requirements. If you are unable to provide the information, it may result in a denial of your benefits.

### **Do I have to take a particular job if one becomes available?**

It is very important that you seek employment at jobs for which you are able to work. You should seek employment at places that utilize your skill set, knowledge and experience level. Labor market information is available at your local workforce center. You should accept a job offer that you feel is “suitable employment.”

### **What is “suitable employment”?**

“Suitable employment” is defined as any work that a person can perform that fits within their skills, ability, training, experience, prevailing wage and commuting distance.

### **What if I refuse a job?**

If you are on unemployment and you refuse a job offer, the Kansas Department of Labor will investigate the job refusal to determine if it was “suitable employment.” Benefits may be denied if the job is deemed “suitable employment” for you.

### **What is a “job offer”?**

A “job offer” is defined as when employment is offered to the applicant. This includes information pertaining to specific job duties, hours of work, company benefits, rate of pay and sometimes an expected start date.

### **What is “prevailing wage”?**

“Prevailing wage” is defined as the wage you can expect to be paid given your abilities and experience, and takes into account job demand, training and local economic conditions. Local labor market information is available at local workforce centers to help you in determining what a prevailing wage is for your area and for the type of work you are seeking.

### **Do I have to take a job for less than I was earning when I got laid off?**

You are required to accept a prevailing wage for your occupation even if the starting wage does not equal your most recent wage rate. Be careful not to set unreasonable restrictions on your work search efforts. If you set your wage rate too high, your employment opportunities will be limited and could affect your unemployment benefits.

### **What if I am self-employed?**

Self-employment must be reported to the Kansas Unemployment Contact Center. The Kansas Department of Labor will then review the hours you spend on self-employment to determine if you are available for full-time employment. Self-employment must be reported when filing your weekly claim.

### **Can I work part time? How much can I earn while I am on unemployment?**

If you have worked full time during the last 18 months, it is very important that you continue to seek full-time employment even if you accept a part-time job. It is possible for you to work part time and still receive unemployment. You will be able to earn up to 25 percent of your weekly benefit amount before any deductions are made. Any earnings over 25 percent of your weekly benefit amount will be deducted dollar for dollar. If you earn your weekly benefit amount or more, you will need to file an additional unemployment claim once you become unemployed or underemployed to begin receiving unemployment benefits again.

### **Can I use a P.O. Box or submit a résumé online?**

If this is your first period of unemployment, we recommend you seek work search assistance through your local workforce center. Most employers prefer you contact them with a résumé and cover letter. Additionally, many employers list job openings online. If you submit your résumé online or to a P.O. Box from a newspaper ad, be sure you capture as much information as possible concerning the job for which you are applying, including a job reference number, address (street, P.O. Box or Web address), the position and to whom you are sending your cover letter.

### **Can I look for work at the same place every week?**

It is important that you do not make unreasonable restrictions on your job search efforts. Limiting your job search to just one or even a few employers is not reasonable when attempting to gain new employment. Expand your job search to other communities in your area – your local workforce center can assist you in identifying additional employment opportunities.

### **How far do I have to drive to look for work?**

You are expected to commute a reasonable distance to your next job. This includes all surrounding towns and communities. Thirty miles is generally considered to be a reasonable commuting distance. You might also want to consider relocation to a different area should an employment opportunity be present.

### **Can I go to school and draw unemployment?**

It is possible for you to attend school and still draw unemployment. If you are attending school strictly for academic purpose, you should consider attending school at night so that it doesn't interfere with your ability to seek and accept work. You also need to adjust your school schedule to accept employment should those hours conflict with your school schedule – you still need to be available for full-time work.

If you are enrolled in a vocational or technical training program, it may be possible for you to be approved for training. This will allow you to attend school full time, concentrate on the training program while gaining new skills and be exempt from seeking employment during your training.

### **Can I draw my pension and/or Social Security while I am on unemployment?**

Receiving Social Security will have no impact on your unemployment claim or benefits – it is not deductible from unemployment insurance benefits.

However, a company pension may be considered deductible income if the employer has reported wages for you during your base period. The receipt of pension benefits must be reported to the Kansas Unemployment Contact Center once you receive your first pension check. Pensions are deducted based on your employer contributions and is applied as a weekly deduction.

### **Does separation pay impact unemployment benefits?**

Separation, termination, severance or other similar pay may delay or reduce your unemployment benefits when paid. If you receive these types of pay, you must report this information when you file your initial application and weekly claims for payment.

### **Can I receive workers compensation and unemployment at the same time?**

The receipt of unemployment benefits is based on your ability to work. You must be able and available to work without any unreasonable restrictions to be eligible for unemployment.

### **Are any benefit extensions available?**

There may be additional forms of benefits available:

- **Trade Adjustment Assistance** is available to employees of companies that the U.S. Department of Labor has certified as being impacted due to overseas trade. **Please note:** if your company has been certified as a “trade-impacted company,” you will receive information concerning this program from the Kansas Department of Labor.

These programs have different requirements. Please visit [www.GetKansasBenefits.gov](http://www.GetKansasBenefits.gov) to see the programs currently available in Kansas.