

# FAQ:

## Unemployment



**MSEA and local associations are strongly advocating for the continued employment of all educators, including utilizing education support professionals and the important and varied skills that they bring to our schools. In the event that school systems instead opt for furloughs, reductions in force, or layoffs, below is some guidance that educators may find helpful.**

### What is the difference between a furlough, a layoff, or a reduction in force (RIF)?

Furloughs must be negotiated with the exclusive bargaining representative. A furlough is a mandatory, albeit temporary leave of absence or reduction of hours for a set period of time from which an employee is expected to return to full-time, regular work. In either case, it results in a reduction of pay.

For example, if a 10-day furlough would be negotiated, then the board would reduce an employee's pay (per diem pay x 10 days) and then proceed to spread the remaining annual salary out over the 18 or 24 pays provided to employees resulting in a consistent, but reduced, pay every two weeks. Benefits are not impacted; the employee retains benefits throughout the year. The furlough days may be negotiated in advance or remain at the employer's discretion to be assigned throughout the year. Employees will not report to work on a furlough day nor will there be pay associated with that day.

This is done when there are budgetary shortfalls, but a continued need for personnel to perform the work and it avoids an actual lay off. Employees who are furloughed may not seek unemployment.

Layoffs or a reduction in force (RIF) are negotiated provisions that permit the employer to dismiss an employee either because the position is no longer needed or there is no budget to support it. Both layoffs and RIFs may be temporary or permanent depending on the circumstances, however, provisions outlining recall are typically outlined in the contract. Employees who are laid off or RIF'd lose all pay and benefits, except through COBRA. As such, employees who are laid off or RIF'd are eligible to seek unemployment benefits.

### What do I do if I'm laid off or subject of a RIF?

1. Contact your local association to ensure that the provisions of the contract have been adhered to appropriately.
2. Contact your employer's human resources department to get a complete copy of your personnel file. Obtain information regarding continuing insurance, benefits, and pension accounts, as well as information regarding any available jobs for which you may qualify.
3. Begin the process of applying for unemployment by gathering needed information.

**In order to process your unemployment claim, you will need to gather and provide the following information:**

#### PERSONAL INFORMATION

- Name
- Date of birth
- Social Security number
- Residential and mailing address
- Telephone number and email address
- Name, date of birth, and Social Security number for each dependent under age 16. Important: a dependent is defined as a son, daughter, stepchild, or legally adopted child under the age of 16 whom you support. At the time that you file your initial claim, only one parent may claim a dependent(s), up to a maximum of five, during any one-year benefit period.
- Alien registration number (if you are not a U.S. citizen or national).

### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY FOR THE LAST 18 MONTHS

- Name, address, and telephone number of each employer covering the 18 months prior to the date you file your initial claim (i.e., business/company name, complete payroll address)
- Employment start and end date, return-to-work date
- Reason for separation from each employer you worked for in the last 18 months prior to filing your claim
- Union name and local number (if you are a union member)

### DOCUMENTS THAT MAY BE NEEDED

- Pay stubs
- Form W-2
- Form 1099

### CORONAVIRUS-RELATED CORRESPONDENCE

- Letter from your employer stating that you were to begin working but cannot now due to the coronavirus
- Correspondence from your employer stating that coronavirus caused the business to close
- Correspondence from your child's school or childcare facility that coronavirus caused them to close
- Documentation from medical personnel showing that someone in your household was diagnosed with or sought treatment for coronavirus

Use the **BEACON One-Stop Online Application** to file all types of claims and weekly certifications including both regular and CARES Act unemployment insurance programs. To use the application, visit <https://beacon.labor.maryland.gov/claimant/>.

If you were given notice that you were being laid off prior to the 2020-2021 school year, and if you did not return after June 2020, you should clearly indicate that information.

If you have questions about this new application, visit **BEACON One-Stop FAQs**. For help with your username and password, visit **BEACON One-Stop Username and Password Handbook**. For additional information about logging into the application, visit **Login Quick Start Guide**. To learn how to upload a document to the BEACON One-Stop, visit the **Document Upload Instruction Guide**.

If you have technical questions, email [BEACON.support@maryland.gov](mailto:BEACON.support@maryland.gov). In your email, please make sure to include your full legal name, complete address, phone number, email address, the last four digits of your Social Security number, claimant ID number, and/or a brief description of the issue you are experiencing.

You can also apply by phone:

7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday

Saturdays from 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Sunday from 12:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

at 1-877-293-4125

**After submitting your application, the Division of Unemployment Insurance will review your application to determine whether you qualify.**

Maintain your certifications. Requirements for maintaining your professional license are not suspended while you are unemployed.

Visit this **NEA Member Benefits** resource page to determine what benefits may be available to members that you can utilize.

More information can be found on this **Maryland Department of Labor** page.