

VEC Office of Communications  
[pio@vec.virginia.gov](mailto:pio@vec.virginia.gov)



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Virginia Unemployment Benefits Increasing in July**

**RICHMOND, Va. — June 25, 2026—** Virginians who become unemployed may be eligible for higher unemployment insurance benefits beginning July 5, 2026.



*Photo courtesy of Matthew Montgomery, Office of Delegate Marty Martinez*

Under new legislation passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Abigail Spanberger, the maximum weekly unemployment benefit will increase from **\$430 to \$478** per week for new unemployment claims filed on or after July 5. This will provide up to **\$48 more** each week for eligible claimants. The legislation [HB1320](#) and [SB759](#) introduced by Delegate Marty Martinez and Senator Adam P. Ebbin will also increase the minimum weekly benefit amount from \$112 to \$160.

“These changes will provide additional financial support to eligible Virginians during periods of unemployment and help families meet essential expenses while they search for

new employment,” said Virginia Employment Commission Commissioner Melissa Smith. “By ensuring households can maintain spending on necessities during difficult times, unemployment insurance also plays a critical role in stabilizing the economy of the Commonwealth.”

**The increased benefit amount applies only to new unemployment insurance claims filed on or after July 5, 2026.** Claims initiated before that date will not be eligible for the increased amount.

Those considering filing an initial unemployment claim should pay close attention to the effective date of the new law and make the filing decision that is best for their individual circumstances. It is important to note that claims cannot be backdated. To help customers make an informed decision, VEC encourages individuals to estimate their potential benefits before filing a claim. The agency's online [Unemployment Insurance Benefits Estimator](#) can help users understand what benefits they may qualify to receive based on their wages, employment history and claim start date.

To qualify for the maximum weekly benefit amount of \$478, an individual's combined earnings from two quarters in the Base Period must total at least \$18,900.01.

For more information on unemployment insurance benefits and VEC services, please visit [www.vec.virginia.gov](http://www.vec.virginia.gov).

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