



Created by Muhammad Tajudin  
from Noun Project

# If you are having any problems with Unemployment Benefits, you can ask your elected officials for help.

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❖ Read this only if you live in the state of Washington.

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## Should I read this?

Yes, if you have applied for, were denied for, are getting, or were recently getting unemployment benefits (UI) through the state of Washington's Employment Security Division (ESD).

## What will I learn from reading this?

You will learn how your elected officials can help you. You will learn how to find out who they are and how to get in touch with them.

## Why do I need to know this?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many more people have been applying for UI than usual. As a result, the system is taking much longer to process claims. It is not always processing claims correctly, or promptly. The website is hard to navigate. It is hard to talk to someone at ESD on the phone.

Here are some common complaints from folks who have applied for UI:

- You applied for UI. ESD turned you down, but did not tell you why you cannot get UI.
- ESD turned down your application for UI and didn't tell you about your right to appeal the denial. (You can appeal the decision! Read [How to Represent Yourself at an Unemployment Benefits Hearing.](#))



- You started getting UI. Then ESD told you that you have an overpayment and have to pay back the UI.
- You tried to send required information, such as proof of who you are, through the website. You lost or were turned down for UI anyway.
- You have been trying to call ESD with your issues or information, but can never get through to anyone.

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❖ This is not a complete list!

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## Why should I contact my legislator?

No matter where you live in the state of Washington, a state representative and a state senator (legislators) represent you. Part of their job is to help constituents (the people they represent) when you have problems with state services. They may be able to contact ESD for you and get your case moving faster.

## I don't know who my legislator is. How do I find out?

You can visit this website: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder>.

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❖ Some legislators have offices listed in the state capitol, Olympia, and in the district that they represent. You should try the district office first.

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## What do I say when I call?

You must tell them the dates you lost your job and filed for unemployment benefits. You should also say whatever else is true of your situation. For example:

*I lost my job on May 15. I applied for unemployment benefits the same day. I have not heard anything from ESD since then. I have called repeatedly but I cannot get through to talk to anyone. In the meantime, I have no income, and I am behind on my rent.*



Washington  
LawHelp

www.WashingtonLawHelp.org

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## Get Legal Help

The **Unemployment Law Project (ULP)** may be able to help you. Call them today:

- (509) 624-9178 or toll-free at (800) 940-9178 (Spokane)
- (206) 441-9178 or toll free at 1-888-441-9178 (Seattle)

Or, if you think you have a low income, you can call the **Northwest Justice Project's CLEAR Hotline** at 1-888-201-1014 weekdays between 9:15 am - 12:15 pm.

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