

RCW 50.20.140 Filing applications and claims—Definitions. (1)

An application for initial determination, a claim for waiting period, or a claim for benefits shall be filed in accordance with such rules as the commissioner may prescribe. An application for an initial determination may be made by any individual whether unemployed or not. Each employer shall post and maintain printed statements of such rules in places readily accessible to individuals in his or her employment and shall make available to each such individual at the time he or she becomes unemployed, a printed statement of such rules and such notices, instructions, and other material as the commissioner may by rule prescribe. Such printed material shall be supplied by the commissioner to each employer without cost to the employer.

(2) The term "application for initial determination" shall mean a request in writing, or by other means as determined by the commissioner, for an initial determination.

(3) The term "claim for waiting period" shall mean a certification, after the close of a given week, that the requirements stated herein for eligibility for waiting period have been met. If RCW 50.20.010(1)(d) is waived, the term "claim for waiting period" is not applicable.

(4) The term "claim for benefits" shall mean a certification, after the close of a given week, that the requirements stated herein for eligibility for receipt of benefits have been met.

(5) A representative designated by the commissioner shall take the application for initial determination and for the claim for waiting period credits or for benefits. When an application for initial determination has been made, the employment security department shall promptly make an initial determination which shall be a statement of the applicant's base year wages, weekly benefit amount, maximum amount of benefits potentially payable, and benefit year. Such determination shall fix the general conditions under which waiting period credit shall be granted and under which benefits shall be paid during any period of unemployment occurring within the benefit year fixed by such determination. [2021 c 2 s 14; 1998 c 161 s 2; 1951 c 215 s 4; 1945 c 35 s 82; Rem. Supp. 1945 s 9998-220. Prior: 1943 c 127 s 4; 1941 c 253 s 4; 1939 c 214 s 4; 1937 c 162 s 6.]

Intent—Conflict with federal requirements—Effective date—2021 c 2: See notes following RCW 50.04.323.

Finding—Intent—1998 c 161: "The legislature finds that the shift by the employment security department from in-person written initial applications for unemployment insurance benefits to a call center approach creates opportunities for improved service but also raises serious concerns. Eliminating face-to-face contact may increase the potential for fraud and reduce the probability that claimants will utilize existing reemployment resources. Therefore, it is the intent of the legislature that if the written application process is to be eliminated, the employment security department must ensure that unemployment insurance claimants remain actively involved in reemployment activities and that an independent evaluation be conducted of the call center approach to unemployment insurance." [1998 c 161 s 1.]

Evaluation of call center: "(1) The joint legislative audit and review committee, in consultation with members of the senate and house

of representatives commerce and labor committees and the unemployment insurance advisory committee, shall conduct an evaluation of the new call center approach to unemployment insurance. The evaluation shall review the performance of the call center system, including, but not limited to, the: (a) Promptness of payments; (b) number and types of errors; (c) amount and types of fraud; and (d) level of overpayments and underpayments, compared with the current system.

(2) The joint legislative audit and review committee is directed to contract with a private entity consistent with the provisions of *chapter 39.29 RCW. The committee shall consult with the unemployment insurance advisory committee in the design of the request for proposals from potential contractors and shall use the advisory committee to evaluate the responses. The joint legislative audit and review committee shall provide a report on its findings and recommendations to the appropriate standing committee of the senate and house of representatives by September 1, 2001." [1998 c 161 s 5.]

***Reviser's note:** Chapter 39.29 RCW was repealed by 2012 c 224 s 29, effective January 1, 2013. See chapter 39.26 RCW.

Funding—1998 c 161 s 5: "The employment security department is authorized to expend funds provided under RCW 50.24.014(1)(b) for the purposes of the evaluation provided for in section 5 of this act." [1998 c 161 s 6.]