Work Search Requirements During COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, work search requirements have been modified as follows:

Q: Do I have to look for work while I collect Unemployment Insurance or Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA) benefits during the COVID-19 crisis?

A: Generally, you do not have to search for work if:

- you were laid off because your employer closed or reduced operations due to COVID-19, and
- your employer told you that you will be called back to work when the business reopens.

Otherwise, you must search for work. It is a challenging time to try to find a job, but you must make your best effort. Essential businesses are still open, and many are hiring due to spikes in demand.

New York State regulations require you to document your work search efforts and submit proof of them if we ask for it. According to the regulations, if you do not search for work, document your work search, and submit proof if asked, you could lose your benefits and have to pay back benefits you received.

Q: What kinds of work search activities do I have to do during the COVID-19 crisis?

A: You must do work search activities that can be done remotely. Examples include:

- Completing online job applications
- Using social networking and other online tools to do job searches
- Calling or emailing employers, unions, or staffing agencies
- Participating in virtual workshops

Q: Do I have to attend an interview during the COVID-19 crisis?

A: You must attend an interview when called to by an essential business. However, if you have any special circumstances that prevent you from appearing for interviews, document them in your work search record.

Q: Will my work search record be verified?

A: Yes. We will verify the information you provide with the contacts you list. According to New York State regulations, if you knowingly give us false information about your work search activities, it is considered fraud and can lead to severe penalties.