MINNESOTA
FRONTLINE WORKER PAY

Frontline Worker Pay Program FAQs

Eligibility

1. Who is eligible?

To be eligible for Frontline Worker Pay, an applicant must:

- have been employed at least 120 hours in Minnesota in one or more frontline sectors between March 15, 2020, and June 30, 2021;
- for the at least 120 hours worked during this time period the applicant –
  - was not able to telework due to the nature of the individual's work and
  - worked in close proximity to people outside of the individual's household;
- meet the income requirements; and
- have not received an unemployment insurance benefit payment for more than 20 weeks for the weeks between March 15, 2020, and June 26, 2021.

2. What are the identified frontline sectors?

The legislation identifies the following sectors in the definition of "frontline sector":

1. building services, including maintenance, janitorial and security;
2. child care;
3. courts and corrections;
4. emergency responders;
5. food service, including production, processing, preparation, sale and delivery;
6. ground and air transportation services;
7. health care;
8. long-term care and home care;
9. manufacturing;
10. public health, social service and regulatory service;
11. public transit;
12. retail, including sales, fulfillment, distribution and delivery;
13. schools, including charter schools, state schools and higher education;
14. temporary shelters and hotels; and
15. vocational rehabilitation.

3. What are the income limits included in the eligibility criteria?

To qualify for a payment, an individual's adjusted gross income*, must be less than the following amounts for at least one of the 2020 or 2021 tax years:

a. for an individual who was employed in an occupation with direct COVID-19 patient care responsibilities, $350,000 for a married taxpayer filing a joint return and $175,000 for all other filers; or
b. for all other individuals, $185,000 for a married taxpayer filing a joint return and $85,000 for all other filers.

**More about adjusted gross income: irs.gov/e-file-providers/definition-of-adjusted-gross-income.*

4. To qualify for the higher adjusted gross income threshold, an individual must have had direct COVID-19 patient care responsibilities. What does "direct COVID-19 patient care responsibilities" mean?

An employee had direct COVID-19 patient care responsibilities if they, as part of their assigned job duties, were responsible for providing direct care to a patient, resident or individual who was diagnosed with COVID-19.

5. What does it mean to work "in close proximity to individuals outside of the individual's household"?

"Close proximity to individuals outside of the individual's household" means within six feet of individuals with whom the applicant does not live.

6. Does a person who voluntarily chose to work at the workplace rather than telework meet the eligibility criteria of "not able to telework"?

No, to meet this eligibility criteria, the applicant must not have had an option to perform work remotely or in telework status.

7. Can family members apply on behalf of otherwise eligible workers who have died?

No, the legislation requires that the individual must apply to the commissioner of labor and industry and, as part of the application, must certify to the commissioner that they meet the eligibility requirements.

8. What are some examples of industries that were not included in the identified "frontline sectors" in the Frontline Worker Pay law?

Some examples of industries not included in the definition of "frontline sectors" include the professional, scientific, and technical services industry, the information services industry, the finance and insurance industry, the utilities industry, the construction industry and the arts, entertainment and recreation industries.

9. Does work as an independent contractor or sole proprietor qualify for Frontline Worker Pay?

No, the eligibility criteria include the requirement that the worker be "employed." Independent contractors and sole proprietors are not employees.

10. What does it mean to be "employed for at least 120 hours"?

The eligibility criteria requires that the applicant be an employee in an employer-employee relationship in a frontline sector for at least 120 hours during the identified time period.

11. Are volunteers eligible for frontline worker pay?

No, the eligibility criteria include the requirement that the worker be "employed." A volunteer is someone who voluntarily donates work and who receives no monetary compensation for the donated work.

12. Are temporary employees eligible for frontline worker pay?

Yes, a temporary worker is eligible if the individual is employed in one of the identified frontline sectors and meets the eligibility criteria set forth in the legislation.

13. Do you have to be a resident of Minnesota to be eligible for frontline worker pay?

No, Minnesota residency is not one of the eligibility criteria set forth in the legislation. However, to be eligible, the applicant must have been employed for at least 120 hours within Minnesota and the other eligibility criteria must be met.

Applications, appeals

14. Where do I apply?

During the application period, eligible frontline workers can apply at frontlinepay.mn.gov. In accordance with the legislation, the application will be open for 45 calendar days.

15. What is the application deadline? Are there any other deadlines I need to know?

The application will remain open for 45 calendar days. The anticipated application period will be open from Wednesday, June 8, through Friday, July 22, 2022. These dates are subject to change. If an application is denied, applicants have 15 days from notice of the denial to appeal the denial. All denials will be communicated by email correspondence.

16. Will I receive my payment quicker if I apply early in the application window?

No, all applications will be processed at the same time and payments will not be made to any eligible frontline workers until after all applications are processed and the appeals period is over.

17. What will I need to know when I apply?

The applicant should be prepared to certify that they meet all eligibility requirements. The application will request the following information: name, address, phone number, email address, date of birth, Social Security number or Individual Tax Identification Number, employer name, employer address, employer phone number, employer email address, dates of relevant employment and job title.

The application will use knowledge-based authentication (KBA) to prove the applicant's identity. The KBA process will require basic information factors, such as name, address and date of birth, which will be used to compile knowledge questions. If KBA questions cannot be generated, the applicant will be asked to verify their identification by scanning an image of an eligible identifying document: passport, I.D. card, driver's license or residence permit. A list of eligible identifying documents can be found here: List of supported documents – Veriff.

The applicant will also be required to choose a form of payment in the event they are deemed eligible for Frontline Worker Pay. The applicant can choose between a direct deposit via an ACH transfer or a prepaid debit card. If the applicant prefers an ACH transfer, they will need to provide their bank routing number and account number.

18. Is my employer required to do anything for me to be deemed eligible for Frontline Worker Pay?

No, an employer is not required to provide documentation or other verification for an application to be processed. The application will require the worker to certify that they meet all eligibility requirements and provide necessary information for verification. The applicant will also be asked to provide authorization for the state to reach out to their current or former employer for purposes of eligibility verification if that is deemed necessary during application review.

19. What if my application is not approved?

If you are notified that your application has been denied, you have the right to appeal the decision within 15 days. To appeal you must follow the instructions in the notification of the denial sent to your email address and include the information necessary to address the eligibility requirements and dispute the reason for denial. The commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry's decision on an appeal is final.

20. How will the applications be verified? How will paying fraudulent claims be avoided?

Applications and eligibility criteria will be verified using information submitted during the application process and during verification processes conducted by the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development and the Minnesota Department of Revenue.

Payments

21. When will I get paid and how much will I receive?

After all the applications have been received and the appeals period has ended, money dedicated to Frontline Worker Pay will be evenly divided among all eligible frontline workers whose application was approved. The payments cannot exceed $1,500. Payments are expected in early fall depending on the time necessary for processing applications, appeals and payments.

22. Will I have to pay taxes on my bonus?

For Minnesota purposes, the frontline worker payment will not be taxable. The Department of Revenue expects the income to be subtracted from federal adjusted gross income on the 2022 Schedule M1M, Income Additions and Subtractions. For federal purposes, the payment is included in federal adjusted gross income.

23. Will frontline worker payments be considered income for determination of public assistance programs?

Frontline worker payments will not be considered income, assets or personal property for purposes of determining eligibility or recertifying eligibility for:

- child care assistance programs under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 119B;
- general assistance, Minnesota supplemental aid and food support under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 256D;
- housing support under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 256I;
- Minnesota family investment program and diversionary work program under Minnesota Statutes, chapter 256J; and
- economic assistance programs under Minnesota Statutes chapter 256P.

24. Is the frontline worker payment included in income for Minnesota's property tax refund or K-12 Education Credit?

No, the frontline worker payment is not included in income for either the Minnesota property tax refund or K-12 Education Credit.

More information, getting help

25. Where can I get complete information?

Complete information is available on the Frontline Worker Pay website at frontlinepay.mn.gov.

26. Who is administering the Frontline Worker Pay program?

The Frontline Worker Pay program is being jointly administered by the Minnesota departments of Employment and Economic Development, Labor and Industry, and Revenue.

27. Where can I get questions answered by a human?

During the application period, an applicant support center will be available to assist applicants in multiple languages.

28. Who decided which workers should get this money?

The Minnesota Legislature drafted and passed frontline worker payment legislation on April 29, 2022, and Gov. Tim Walz signed the bill that same day.

29. Is there assistance for workers who speak a language other than English?

Yes, information is available on the Frontline Worker Pay website at frontlinepay.mn.gov in multiple languages or by contacting the applicant support center after the application is available.

30. How do I know if I received more than 20 weeks of unemployment?

You can access your unemployment insurance benefit history by following the instructions located on the Minnesota Unemployment Insurance's "Print payment history" webpage.

31. How can I check what my adjusted gross income was for tax years 2020 and 2021?

You can find your adjusted gross income for tax year 2020 or 2021 by looking at your 2020 or 2021 Minnesota tax filing. Your adjusted gross income is located on line 1 of your form M1.

Help for employers

32. What are the posting requirements for the notice form?

No later than 15 days after the application period is opened, employers in a frontline sector must provide notice, in a form approved by the commissioner of the Department of Labor and Industry, advising all current workers who may be eligible for Frontline Worker Pay of the assistance potentially available to them and how to apply for benefits. An employer must provide notice using the same means the employer uses to provide other work-related notices to employees.

The notice must be at least as conspicuous as:

- posting a copy of the notice at each worksite where workers work and where the notice may be readily observed and reviewed by all workers working at the site; or
- providing a paper or electronic copy of the notice to all workers.

33. Where do I get the notice form that I am required to provide to my employees?

The information will soon be posted on frontlinepay.mn.gov in English, Hmong, Somali and Spanish.