



Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed

April 2010

Self Employed

What you need to know if you become unemployed

Qualifying for an unemployment payment

There are two unemployment payments – Jobseeker's Benefit (JB) and Jobseeker's Allowance (JA). Usually a self-employed person pays Class S PRSI (stamps) which do not entitle the applicant to a JB payment.

JB differs to JA because JB is paid regardless of your means or income, whereas JA is a means-tested payment. Class S PRSI contributes towards benefits such as pensions.

If you have worked as an employee in the last 4 years you may have paid Class A PRSI and may be entitled to a JB payment. Check with your local Social Welfare Office.

However, if you do not qualify for a JB payment you may qualify for means-tested JA providing you are:

- Resident in the Irish Republic
- Aged 18 or over
- Aged under 66
- Fully unemployed or unemployed for at least 3 days out of any consecutive 6 days

And you

- Satisfy a means test (including a partner's means)
- Satisfy the Habitual Residence Condition – You will usually satisfy the rule if you have been legally residing in Ireland for 2 years or more, have worked in Ireland and intend to remain in Ireland.
- Satisfy Genuinely Seeking Work criteria

GENUINELY SEEKING WORK – in order to qualify for, and continue to receive a JA/JB payment you must be seeking and available to take-up full-time work or self-employment and willing to accept any reasonable offer of employment, education, training or development

i You do NOT need to de-register as self-employed to receive a Jobseeker's payment.

Qualifying for an unemployment payment

A MEANS TEST is carried out by a Deciding Officer in the local Social Welfare office to determine whether you will qualify for JA and how much that payment will be.

The following are assessed in the means test:

- Capital (e.g. savings – First €20,000 not assessed)
- Property (other than your own home)
- Benefit and Privilege (applies if aged under 25)
- Household Income (which includes self-employment earnings / a spouses income and any rental income)

The assessment of your income from self-employment depends on what you can reasonably be expected to earn from your business over the next 12 months.

The Deciding Officer will take into account your income from the last 12 months (or longer) as a guide in determining your likely earnings over the next 12 months. You may be asked to show a record of business transactions or audited accounts where available.

It is very important to explain to the Deciding Officer any changes (economic or otherwise) that have affected and are likely to continue to affect your business, as this may increase the possibility of receiving a JA payment.

2010 Maximum JA Payment Rates

Personal Rate	€196.00
Qualified Adult (spouse or partner)	€130.10
Each Qualified Child	€ 29.80
Each Qualified Child Half Rate	€ 14.90

- Under 25 year olds may receive a reduced JA payment

BOGUS SELF-EMPLOYMENT The Scope section in the Department of Social Protection will determine if you were paying the correct class of PRSI. If Scope determines that you should have been classified as an employee rather than self-employed you may be entitled to a redundancy payment and a JB payment.


Applying for a JA Payment

When applying for JA at your local Social Welfare Office the following checklist will help you in making your claim:

- ✓ Register with FÁS
- ✓ Bring a record of your business transactions (bank statements and audited accounts if available)
- ✓ Bring a record of your partner's earnings
- ✓ Bring proof of identity (eg. passport/driving licence)
- ✓ Bring proof of your address (eg. ESB bill, bank statement or tax document).

PART-TIME WORKING AND JOBSEEKER'S ALLOWANCE

A person can work for up to 3 days per week and still claim JA for the other 3 days they are unemployed providing they are seeking full-time employment. You and/or your partner may work part-time and still claim part of a JA payment.

 JA/JP payments are made weekly, through the Post Office.

SUPPLEMENTARY WELFARE ALLOWANCE (SWA) PAYMENT can provide a weekly allowance to qualified people who have little or no income. If you are refused a JA/JP payment you may qualify for a SWA Payment from the Community Welfare Officer in your local health centre subject to a means test.

Other Financial Assistance


SECONDARY BENEFITS If you receive a JA payment you may be entitled to other benefits including:

- A medical card or a GP visit card
- Rent Supplement / Mortgage Interest Supplement
- Exceptional or Urgent Needs payment

APPEALING A PAYMENT REFUSAL If you have been refused a JA, JP or a SWA payment you should appeal that decision as soon as possible. It is important that you ask for any decision in writing. For further information contact the INOU.

Education & Training Options

FÁS (The National Training and Employment Authority) has a network of Regional/Local Offices nationwide. An Employment Services Officer can offer advice on training opportunities. You may be entitled to certain allowances while on a FÁS training course.

 If you have no entitlement to a JA payment you will not receive any FÁS training allowance.

FÁS TRAINING OPTIONS

Local Training Initiatives (LTI) are full-time and provide participants with work experience and training. Participants receive a FÁS training allowance.

Work Placement Programme is a 9 month work experience programme that allows people in receipt of JA for 3 months to keep their payment and entitlements.

FÁS Specific Skill Training Courses are day-time/evening time courses which typically last 4-6 months.


LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYED OPTIONS

The **Back to Work Enterprise Allowance** supports people on a JA payment for 12 months or more, to set up a business. You can keep your full unemployment payment in the first year and 75% in the second year.

Community Employment (CE) schemes provide training and work experience, primarily to long-term unemployed people. People on CE work for an average of 19.5 hours per week (or 39 hours per fortnight).


Contact your local FÁS office for further information.

 www.fas.ie

 01 607 0500



Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed
For further information contact the INOU.

 01 856 0088

 welfareinfo@inou.ie

 redundancy@inou.ie

websites: www.inou.ie www.redundancy.ie

Education & Training Options

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEES (VECs) are statutory education bodies that administer secondary/adult education and grants / funding for third-level education. For further information visit: www.vec.ie


COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES provide third-level education for students including places for unemployed people through initiatives such as the part-time undergraduate / postgraduate Schemes.


FURTHER EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPTIONS

Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme (VTOS) is the main full-time second-level adult education programme which allows unemployed people to keep their social welfare payment and return to education.

Back to Education Allowance (BTEA) is a scheme which allows unemployed people to keep their social welfare payment and return to approved full-time education.

Skillnets enables groups of companies within the private sector to set up training networks. Training delivery is industry driven. The majority of training courses will be open to self-employed people who have ceased trading as well as people on a Jobseeker's Allowance or Jobseeker's Benefit payment.

 www.skillnets.ie

 01 207 9630

Useful Websites

www.welfare.ie

www.fit.ie

www.vec.ie

www.qualifax.ie

www.nightcourses.ie

www.learning.ie

www.cao.ie

www.fetac.ie

www.heai.ie

www.fas.ie

www.education.ie

www.vtos.ie

www.studentfinance.ie

www.gotocollege.ie

www.educationireland.ie

www.aontas.ie

www.hetac.ie

www.bluebrick.ie