

The Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) is seeing an increase in fraudulent attempts to apply for unemployment benefits using previously stolen identities.

This is a widespread issue affecting unemployment programs in every state. L&I continues to work closely with its counterparts, as well as federal and state authorities, to hold fraudsters accountable and implement methods to identify and block these fraud attempts.

Unemployment fraud can affect children, retirees, workers, and legitimate claimants. Criminals frequently steal identities to commit fraud themselves or to sell personal identifiable information to other criminals on the online black market, also known as the dark web. As a result, information stolen from one organization may be used by criminals to commit fraud against other organizations.

Commonwealth residents should be vigilant in protecting their personal information and reporting suspected or known fraud and identity theft. If you or someone you know believes they are a victim of unemployment fraud, L&I recommends that you take the following steps.

### **What to do when someone files for unemployment benefits using your identity**

- File a fraud report form online:
  - [Unemployment compensation fraud](#)
  - [Federal Pandemic Unemployment Assistance \(PUA\) fraud](#)
- File via phone:
  - Call the PA Fraud Hotline at 800-692-7469
- File a report with police:
  - Contact police in the municipality you resided in at the time the unemployment fraud occurred/benefits in question were paid. A copy of the filed police report must also be provided to the Office of Unemployment Compensation.
- Start a recovery plan with the Federal Trade Commission by visiting [www.identitytheft.gov](http://www.identitytheft.gov).

### **How to protect yourself against unemployment scams**

- Never give out your personal information over email or text message.
- Don't open or respond to unsolicited emails or text messages.
- Never give out your personal information on websites or social media channels – especially those that claim they can help you apply for unemployment benefits. Third parties can't apply for your benefits.
- Don't trust or rely on unemployment benefits information from unofficial websites – always visit [www.uc.pa.gov](http://www.uc.pa.gov) for Pennsylvania unemployment program information.

Visit <https://www.uc.pa.gov/Fraud/Pages/default.aspx> for more unemployment fraud information and tips.