

Self-Employed Individual Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility:

How do I know if I am self-employed?

To be considered self-employed for PFL, you need to carry on a trade or business as a:

- Sole proprietor,
- Independent contractor, or
- A member of a partnership.

The income you receive from your business must be reportable as self-employment income to the IRS. To be eligible for benefits, the income you earned must have been for work performed more than 50% of the time in DC.

For more information on self-employment income, please visit:

<https://www.irs.gov/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed>

What if I'm only self-employed part-time?

Part-time self-employed individuals are still eligible for PFL. If you work for an employer who is required to participate in the PFL program, then your PFL benefits may reflect both your self-employment income and your wages received from your employer. However, your total PFL benefits cannot exceed the maximum weekly benefit amount of \$1,000.

Can members of the gig economy like Uber/Lyft drivers opt in?

Yes, if you are an independent contractor, then you are eligible to opt in as self-employed. To receive benefits, you must earn income for work performed more than 50% of the time in DC.

Opting Into the Program:

When can I opt in?

There are 3 times a self-employed individual can opt in:

- The first 90 days of program commencement in 2019 (July 1, 2019 – September 28, 2019),
- Every November and December (Starting in 2020), or
- Within 60 days of becoming self-employed in DC.

What documents do I need to opt in?

You must provide documents to prove your self-employment in DC. This can be done by providing a copy of your DC business license or occupational license. You can also submit:

- Contracts,
- Tax documents,
- Billings from or payments to a DC address (including electronic billings),
- Documents demonstrating that work was performed at a specific site in DC, or
- Similar documentation that demonstrates self-employment in DC.

How do I opt in?

You can opt in beginning July 1, 2019 via the Online Portal at <https://essp.does.dc.gov/>.

What is the Online Portal?

The online portal is a way for self-employed individuals to:

- Report their self-employment income,
- Pay quarterly contributions, and
- Receive notifications from DOES.

Beginning July 1, 2020, you will also be able to use a separate online portal to file and monitor your benefit claims.

What if I don't have access to a computer? Can I still participate in the program?

If you don't have computer access, then you can request paper registration, communication, and filing, from DOES.

How much does the program cost me?

Opting in to the program is free. However, you must pay a contribution of 0.62% on your DC gross self-employment income at the end of every quarter, starting the quarter that you opt in.

Contribution Equation:

$$0.62\% (0.0062)$$

x

Gross income from all self-employment businesses where you perform work more than 50% of the time in DC

What is the payment schedule?

Income reports and contributions are due the day after a quarter ends. They will be considered late and subject to penalties if they are not filed by the last day of the month following the close of a quarter.

What happens if I don't opt in?

If you don't opt in when you are first eligible, then whenever you do opt in you must remain in the program for three (3) years.

	Start Date	End Date	Due Date	Final Deadline
Quarter 1	January 1	March 31	April 1	April 30
Quarter 2	April 1	June 30	July 1	July 31
Quarter 3	July 1	September 30	October 1	October 31
Quarter 4	October 1	December 31	January 1	January 31

Changes to Self-Employment

What if my business changes and I hire someone?

If you hire an employee, then you may be considered a covered employer and be required to create a separate employer PFL account to report and pay contributions on your employee's wages. If you continue to earn self-employment income as a business owner, then you can continue to maintain a separate self-employment PFL account.

What if I change my mind and want to opt out?

If you no longer want to be a part of the PFL program but remain self-employed, then you can opt out during November and December of any year beginning in 2020.

If you later decide to rejoin, you can't apply for paid leave benefits for at least one (1) year after opting back into the program. In addition, if you opt out of the program two (2) or more times, then you can't opt back in for five (5) years, starting from the date of your last opt out.

What if I stop being self-employed after I opt in?

If you're no longer eligible for the program, then you can request to be removed from the program. Unlike opting out, you can request removal at any time and it doesn't impose any restrictions or penalties. To request removal, at least one of the following has to occur:

- Your primary place of business moved outside of DC and you have no intention to earn self-employment income in DC within the next 52 weeks;
- You accepted employment for an employer (covered or non-covered) and you have no intention to earn self-employment income within the next 52 weeks;
- You have no intention to earn income from work performed more than 50% of the time in DC; or
- You have no intention to earn any income within the next 52 weeks.

What if I want to opt back in after I'm removed?

If you earn self-employment income after being removed from the program, then you will be considered opted into the program. You must notify DOES and resume paying contributions.

PFL Benefits Overview:

How is paid family leave different than short-term disability insurance?

Unlike most short-term disability insurance plans, PFL will allow you to receive paid leave to care for family members and for parental bonding. However, some leave events related to personal medical leave and childbirth that are covered by PFL may also be covered under a short-term disability plan. PFL does not restrict your ability to receive short-term disability. Consult your insurance plan administrator if you have any questions about how your short-term disability plan interacts with paid leave.

How much are benefits?

You will receive benefits determined on a sliding scale based on your reported income, up to 90% of your average weekly wage and up to a max of \$1,000 for each week you're on leave.

When can I receive benefits?

PFL benefits will be available beginning July 1, 2020.