State of North Carolina Unemployment Insurance

Guide to Online Claimant Self Service

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Getting Started

Introduction

Welcome to the State of North Carolina Unemployment Insurance Claimant Self Service (CSS) system. You can use this online system to file an unemployment insurance claim, file your weekly certification, check on the status of an existing claim, and more. This reference guide provides instructions on how to perform these activities.

Filing a claim for Unemployment Benefits involves two steps:

- Registering and applying for benefits (providing information about you, your past employment, your separation from employment, and other information to establish your claim for benefits and to help determine your eligibility).

- Filing a weekly certification to certify your unemployment for the past week and to request a weekly benefit payment. To continue receiving benefits, you will need to file a claim for each week to verify your ongoing eligibility.

For additional information about claim eligibility and the overall process, refer to the Unemployment Insurance Overview listed on our website des.nc.gov.
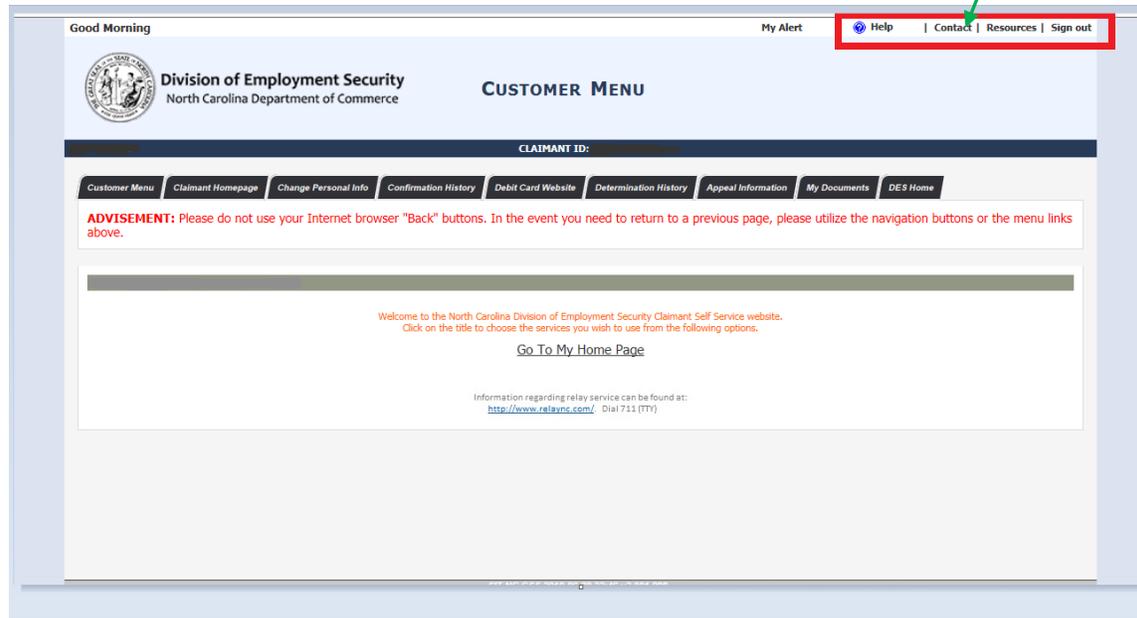
Basic System Navigation

Many of the system's screens have common features that are described below:

> There are links in the upper right corner of most screens that provide you with additional support:
> • The <u>Help</u> link contains links to this reference guide.
> • The <u>Contact</u> link provides our Agency Call Center phone number and hours of operation.
> • The <u>Resources</u> link will redirect customers to the Division of Employment Security website.
> • Be sure to click the link Logoff or Sign Out when you are done using the system.

Note that you should not use the Internet browser's **Back** button to navigate through the screens in CSS. Instead, you should use the buttons on the screens (some screens contain a CSS **Back** button) or use the top navigation menu to move between screens.

> *Note that the screenshots used throughout this guide are meant for illustrative purposes, and not all intended to be readable within this document.*
>
> *All identifiable information has been removed from screen fields.*

Step 1: Completing Your Claimant Registration

Background

After creating your online IDM account, the next step in the filing process is to complete your online registration information. Doing so involves the following:

- Entering your Personal, Address, Contact, and Demographic Information

Note the following:

- If you have an existing or had a prior claim, some of this information may be pre-populated. In this case, you would update any out-of-date information and provide any missing required information. (In the future, if you are filing a new claim, and have completed your registration in CSS, the system will not require you to complete it a second time. However, you should review and update your personal information as needed.)

- The system saves your responses as you move from screen to screen. If you leave the system without completing your registration or claim, you will be required to complete this process upon logging in.

- If you start the claims filing process and do not complete it, you have seven (7) calendar days to log back in to complete your filing. After seven (7) days of inactivity, the system erases any partially saved claim information and you will have to start over. Be aware that the benefit period is based on the date your claim is completed, and not on the date you started.

Instructions

1. Complete the empty fields on the "Personal Information" screen.

   - Notice the Advisement in orange text at the top of the screen indicating that you should not use the Internet browser **Back** button when navigating through the CSS screens.

   - Some of the fields on the "Personal Information" screen will be pre-populated based on the information you entered when creating your online account.

   - You should complete the **Other Last Name Used** and **Other SSN Used** fields if you have used a different last name or SSN during any part of the previous 24 months.

   - All required fields will be indicated by an orange asterisk in front of the field name and must be completed before advancing to the next screen.

   - After entering information on this screen, click the **Next** button.

2. Complete the information on the "Address" screen.

    - A "Residential Address" is required. A Post Office Box cannot be a residential address. A Post Office box cannot be a residential address.

    - You should enter a "Mailing Address" if your place of residence is different than your Mailing Address.

    - If there is additional address information, such as a Post Office box number, suite number, or apartment number, you can enter it into the **Address Line 1** field.

    - After selecting North Carolina as your state of residence, the **Closest Employment Services Office** field will display and you must select the NCDES office that is closest or most convenient for you.

    - After entering information on this screen, click the **Next** button.

3. If the address you entered is incomplete or not recognized by the system, the "Address Search Result" screen will appear and provide options to validate your address information.

   - You can choose to accept the address you entered under "User entered Residential address" or instead select a system-suggested address under the "Addresses selected by the system" list (if applicable).

   - After making your address selection, click the **Select** button to populate the address field with the correct address.

4. Complete the information on the "Contact" screen.

   - If you choose "E-mail" as your **Preferred Contact Method** for correspondences, you must include an email address in the **Email Address** field and be sure to read the special message regarding email.   A valid telephone number is suggested for immediate contact, if necessary.

   - After entering information on this screen, click the **Next** button.

5. Complete the information on the "Demographics" screen.

    - If you select "No" for the **U.S. Citizen** option, you will be required to enter your **Alien Registration Number.**

    - If you select "Other" as your **Preferred Language**, you will be required to enter your preferred language in the next field. Otherwise, leave this field blank.

    - After entering information on this screen, click the **Next** button.

6. Read the information text on the "Customer Menu" screen and then select the **Go To My Homepage** hyperlink to access your Claimant Homepage.

7. Or, click the **File a New Unemployment Insurance Claim** hyperlink to continue the claims filing process.

Step 2: Applying for Benefits

Background

After completing your registration, you are ready to apply for benefits (set up your initial claim). Doing so involves the following:

- Providing required eligibility information.
- Providing or verifying up to a 24-month employment history and information about your last employer (and possibly your next-to-last employer).
- Providing information about your separation(s) and your work search.
- Reviewing the information entered and submitting your claim.
- Providing additional information through dynamic fact finding (DFF), if prompted.

Note the following:

- After applying for benefits, you will need to file a weekly certification each week to receive benefits (discussed in the next section).
- This section is specific to setting up an initial claim. If you had a break in your weekly filing process and need to re-open an existing claim, you should refer to the section on *Reactivating a Claim*.

Instructions

1. On the "Customer Menu "screen. Click the **File a New Unemployment Insurance Claim** link.

2. The system displays the "Before You Begin" screen. Be sure to read the important information section so that you will have all the necessary required information prior to filing your claim. Scroll to the bottom of the screen and click the **Next** button to continue.

3. You will arrive on the "Eligibility" screen. The tabs at the top of the screen indicate the steps that you will go through to apply for benefits.

    - Be sure to read each question carefully and select the correct option.

    - Complete all the questions appropriately and click the **Next** button. Note that on this screen and subsequent screens, you must supply all required responses to advance to the next screen.

4. The next screen contains the "Initial Claims Questions". Answer each question as appropriate and click the **Next** button.

5. The next screen continues the "Employment Questions". Answer each question as appropriate and click the **Next** button.

- Review and provide additional information about your work history. Make sure that every employer for which you have worked during the base period (last 18 months) is listed. If any are missing, add them as follows:

To add a North Carolina employer, click the **Add North Carolina Employer** button to open the "Add NC Employer" screen. You can either search for a North Carolina employer or manually add them. It is best to first search for them to see if they are already in the system. If you do not find the desired employer using the search function, you can click the **Manual Entry** button to add them manually. When done, click the **Finished Adding North Carolina Employer. Continue to Next Screen** button.

To add a Federal employer, click the **Add Federal Employer** button to open the "Add Federal Employer" screen. There are two ways to enter a Federal employer. (i) You can select from the **Most Common Federal Employers** dropdown list and then click the **Add Employer** button.(ii) Alternatively you can search for the employer using the search functionality. When done, click the **Finished Adding Federal Employers** button.

To add a Military employer, click the **Add Military Employer** button to open the "Add Military Employer" screen. Select the employer from the dropdown list. Then answer the "Yes/No" question and click the **Add Employer** button. Then click the **Finished Adding Military Employers** button.

To add an out of state employer, click the **Add Out of State Employer** button to open the "Add Out of State Employer" screen. Enter the employer information into the fields provided and click the **Add Employer** button. Then click the **Finished Adding Out of State Employers** button.

- Enter the type of employment and employment dates for your most recent employer, as well as dates for any Federal or Military employers.

- After entering information on this screen, click the **Next** button.

6. If you had more than one employer listed on the "Employment History" screen, the system will display a "Collect Separation Information" screen listing each of those employers.

    -   If you receive this screen, click the **Provide Additional Information** link for the first employer listed and complete the resulting screen (see next step). You will be redirected back to this screen to complete separation information for the next employer. Once you complete the process for each of the employers listed, you will continue through the remainder of the instructions.

    -   If you do not receive this screen, you will proceed directly to the next step.

7. Complete the information on the "Separation" screen.

    -   For the **Reason employment ended** field, select the separation reason that most accurately describes your reason for separating from employment.

    -   After entering information on this screen, click the **Next** button.

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8. The "Other Separation" screen asks you for additional information regarding your separation and claim eligibility. Complete the information on this screen appropriately.

    - Click on the *Federal Income Tax* and *State Income Tax* hyperlinks to see more information helpful for completing those fields.

    - If you choose to receive your benefits via Debit Card the "Benefits Payment Method" screen will display and you will need to agree to the terms of the bank agreement.

    - After entering information on this screen, click the **Next** button.

9. The next screen asks for information regarding your work search and availability to work. Complete the information as appropriate.

    - After entering information on the screen, click the **Next** button to continue.

10. The "Summary" screen displays the information you entered in the previous screens. Be sure to carefully review this information before proceeding.

- If you need to change **any** information, each section contains an **Edit** button that will navigate you to the appropriate screen to make any necessary changes. You would then click that screen's **Next** button to return to this "Summary" screen.

- Before submitting your claim application, it is recommended that you use the **Print** button at the bottom of the screen to print a copy of your information for your personal records.

- Click the **Next** button at the bottom of the screen when you are ready to continue.

11. Be sure to read the information on the "Submit Claim" screen and select the appropriate options.

- You will need to accept the **Terms and Conditions** in the "Acknowledgements" section at the bottom of the screen by reading and clicking each checkbox.

    Click the **Continue** button (scroll to the bottom of the screen).

- If you decide you are not yet ready to continue your claim, you can click the **I Do Not Wish to File** button (scroll to the bottom of the screen). Doing so will save all previously entered claim information for 7 calendar days, during which time you can return to submit your claim.

12. Once you have submitted your claim, you will arrive on the "File Claim Confirmation" screen.

- Be sure to carefully read the information on this screen.

- This screen contains your **Confirmation Number** as well as additional information you will need to begin filing your weekly benefit claims. It is recommended that you use the **Print** button at the bottom of the screen print a copy of this information for your records.

- Now that your initial claim has been filed, DES will determine your eligibility for benefits based on your separation from your employer and UI Law. A Fact Finding for eligibility will be required for any separation other than lay off. You will be notified of the determination.

- You can click the **Claimant Homepage** to access your CSS Homepage.
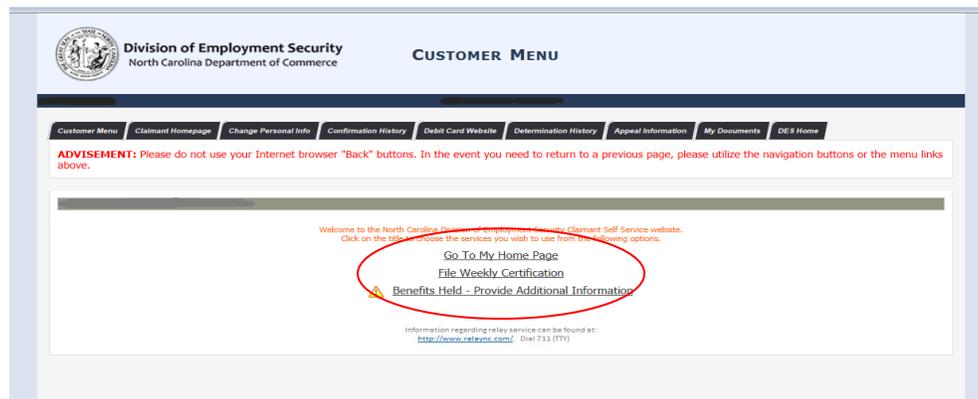
Step 4: Claiming Weekly Benefits

Background

For each week you wish to request a benefit payment, you must file a weekly certification, you must file a weekly certification. The benefit week begins on Sunday-at 12:01 a.m. and ends on the following Saturday at midnight. You may not file a weekly certification until the week has ended.

Note that if you have a break in filing for 15 days or more, your claim is inactive, you should advance to the section of this guide book on *Reactivating a Claim*.

Instructions

1. After logging into your portal via DES website, you will have access to file your weekly certification from the Customer Menu page.

2. Click the **File Weekly Certification** link. (You will only have this link if a weekly certification is available to be filed.)

3. Be sure to read the reminders on the "Important Information" screen before continuing with the weekly certification process. Then click the **Next** button.

4. The "Eligible Weeks" screen lists the week for which you are eligible to file for benefits. Note the following:

- On the far right, weeks not yet filed are indicated as "Available". Once you file a week, it will remain on this screen with a "Completed" indicator until it is processed. After the week has been processed, it has been processed, it will be removed from this screen.

- If you have multiple weeks to be filed, you must complete each week individually from start to finish, before filing for the next week. The system will only allow you to file the weeks earliest to latest.

- For the earliest available week listed, indicate if you wish to file. Then indicate whether you have had a separation from employment during that week.

- After entering information on this screen, click the **Next** button.

5. If, on the prior screen, you indicated that you want to file for the selected week, you will be directed to the "Certification" screen. Answer all the questions on this screen and then click the **Next** button.

6. Review the answers displayed on the "Confirm Answers" screen.

    •   If the system identifies responses that could impact your eligibility for benefits, they will be displayed at the bottom of the screen.

    •   If you need to correct an answer, click the **I need to correct my answers** button to return to the "Eligible Weeks" screen (scroll to the bottom of the screen). You will then be able to walk through each screen again and make appropriate changes to your answers.

    •   Once all your answers are correct, click the **My answers are correct** button (at the bottom of the screen).

7. Be sure to read the "Weekly Certification" information on the "Agreement" screen.

- If you are ready to submit your weekly certification, click the **I Wish to Certify** button.

- If you click the **I Do Not Wish To Certify At This Time** button, you will be returned to the "Claimant Homepage" screen and the weekly certification will not be filed. You can then complete the weekly certification within 14 days of the week ending date.

8. You will arrive on the "Confirmation" screen.

- Be sure to read the information on this screen, including your **Confirmation Number** and the section explaining your weekly job search activities.

- Use the **Print** button at the bottom of the screen to print the information (including your **Confirmation Number**) for your records.

- Note that although there were no issues detected on the weekly certification, there may be other issues delaying payment on your claim. These issues are listed at the bottom of the screen. All weekly certifications will be held until determinations on these issues have been made.

- If there are additional weeks for which you can claim benefits, you can click the **Weekly Certification** button (scroll to the bottom of the screen). Doing so will return you to the "Eligible Weeks" screen where you can complete your next weekly certification.

- If there are no additional weeks to file you, can choose to return to your "Claimant Homepage" to view your information if desired or click the **Logoff** button.
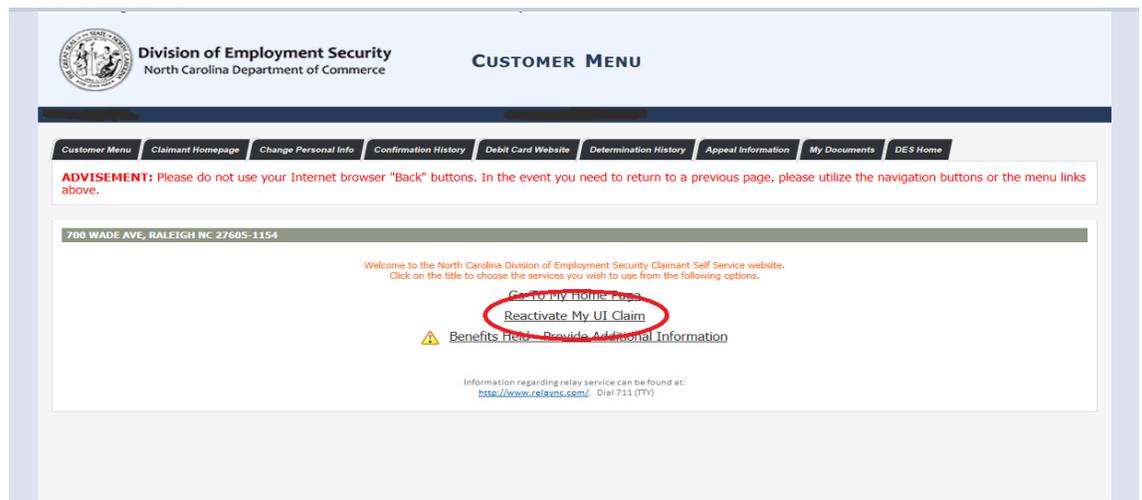
Step 5: Reactivating a Claim

Background

If you have a break in filing for 15 days or more due to other employment or other reasons due to other employment or other reasons, your claim will automatically become inactive. However, you will be able to reactivate your claim if the benefit year has not yet expired and if you have not yet exhausted the benefits.

Instructions

1. Log into the CSS system using your CSS account **Username** and **Password**.

2. Click the **Reactivate My UI Claim** link. (Note that you will see this link if you have had a break in filing for 15 days or more.)

3. This series of screens contain the same questions as those you <u>answered</u> when you filed your initial claim. Answer the questions on these screens as appropriate and click the **Next** button on each screen to continue. Please refer to page 14 through 22 for review.

4. Review the "Summary" screen in the same manner as when you filed your initial claim and use the **Edit** buttons if you need to make any corrections.

   - It is recommended that you print this screen for your records.

   - Click the **Next** button

5. Review and complete the "Submit Claim" screen in the same manner as when you filed your initial claim.

   - You will need to accept the **Terms and Conditions** by clicking each of the checkboxes in the "Acknowledgements" section (scroll to the bottom of the screen).

   - As when you filed your initial claim, you should print this information if you would like a copy for your records.

- Click the button at the bottom of the screen.

6. You will arrive on the "File Claim Confirmation" screen and receive a confirmation number.

   a. After filing your claim, if desired, you can view information about your reactivate request by clicking the **Claimant Homepage** link at the bottom of the screen and clicking the **View** link in the "View Reactivate History" column related to your claim. Doing so will open the "Reactivate History" screen.

7. You will arrive on the "File Claim Confirmation" screen and receive a confirmation number.

   a. After filing your claim, if desired, you can view information about your reactivate request by clicking the **Claimant Homepage** link at the bottom of the screen and clicking the **View** link in the "View Reactivate History" column related to your claim. Doing so will open the "Reactivate History" screen.

Step 6. Additional CSS Functionality

Background

This section provides an overview of the functions and various types of information available in CSS using the options on the top menu.

The Customer Menu

Each time you log into CSS, you arrive on the "Customer Menu" screen (you can also get back to this screen by clicking the **Customer Menu** option on the top menu). Depending on the status of your claim, you may see one or more of the following links:

- Go to My Home Page
- File Weekly Certification
- Resume My UI Claim
- Reactivate My UI Claim
- Benefits Held – Provide Additional Information (If you see this link, you should click on it and answer any questions the system may ask to prevent a possible delay in the processing of your claim.)
- From time to time, NCDES may also display messages on this screen such as hours of operation or special holiday schedules.

The Claimant Homepage

The "Claimant Homepage" is your "dashboard" that provides an overview of your claim history, payment history, messages, any outstanding fact finding (unresolved questions needed to help determine your eligibility), and other information. From this screen you can navigate to other detail pages and update your registration information.

- You can click the **Change Personal Info** link if you need to update your name, address, or email information.

- The "Claims" section displays an overview of your claim filing history. It contains links to the summary of your initial claim answers, as well as any additional or reactivated claims that have been filed.

- If you have an overpayment, the amount you owe will be listed to the right of the "Claims" header line with a **Make Payment** link.

- Clicking on a claim's date under the **View Claim History End Date** column opens the "Claim History" screen. That screen displays specific information for the claim selected, including the amount you were paid, your remaining balance, and any overpayment balance you may have on your claim. It also contains "View Claim Answers" links where you can view the answers you provided when you filed the weekly certification for each week.

- The "Payments" section contains a list of your payment history. For any payments listed, you can click the link to see additional information.

- The "Issues Delaying Payment" section lists any outstanding issues on your claim. Those having a blue, underlined "hyperlink" indicate outstanding fact-finding questions you need to resolve by the **Complete By** date listed.

- Depending on the status of your claim, the "Smart Links" section may contain links to reactivate a claim, file special program claims, file a weekly certification, view your 1099-G, etc.

Changing Your Personal Information

The "Change Personal Information" screen contains links that allow you to access the screens you originally completed during your registration process, in the event you need to update any of your registration information.
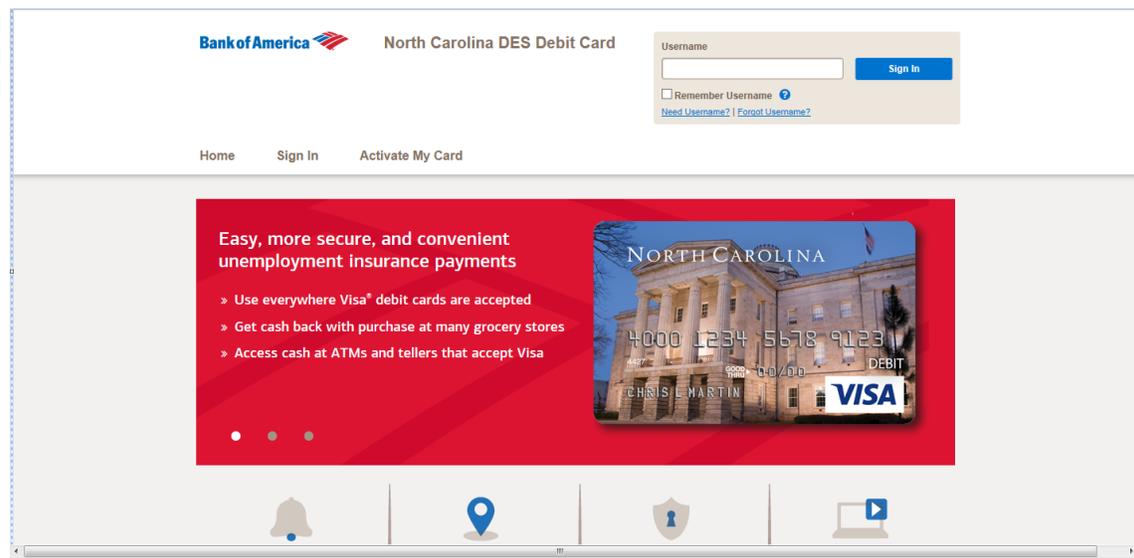
Viewing Your Confirmation History

The "Claimant Confirmation History" screen lists any actions performed on your claim, along with the date and time they occurred, and the confirmation number associated with the action. This is a useful screen when you have a question about whether an action has been successfully completed on your claim.

Accessing the Debit Card Website

Clicking the **Debit Card Website** link from the menu opens the "Bank of America" website in a new window. You will need to follow instructions on this website to activate your card or set up a Username.

Viewing Your Determination History

The "Determination History" screen displays a list of all determinations that have been made on your claim.

- You have ten days to appeal the Wage Transcript and Monetary Determination.
- You can select to view an image of a determination notice by clicking on its link.

- If there is a determination on your claim that is not in your favor a **Request Appeal** button will be displayed on the screen. You can click that button to file an appeal for the determination.
- There are buttons available to print your list of determinations and access your homepage.

Appeals Information

The Appeals Information screen allows you to view information regarding any appeal scheduled for hearing.

- "Appeals History" provides information about the Appeal Date, Appeal ID, and Status of the Appeal (e.g. requested, scheduled, rescheduled, decision pending or closed).
- "Hearing History" provides the Docket Number associated with the appeal, Hearing Method of contact for the scheduled hearing, Location, Date and Time, and Hearing Official.
- "Schedule Details" provides Hearing Method, Date and Time, and Hearing Location.
- "Hearing Issues" lists the Issues considered for the scheduled hearing and the Appellant of such appeal.

Viewing My Documents

The "My Documents" screen contains a list of documents related to your claim.

- The "Sent by NCDES" and "Received by NCDES" sections contain copies of correspondences sent to you from the agency and that the agency has received from you.

- The "Fact Finding" section contains copies of the fact-finding summary screens from any dynamic fact finding you completed.

- You can click on a correspondence hyperlink to view or print an image of a document.

- At the bottom of this page, you have the option to upload additional documents for your claim or appeal.

Guide to Online
Claimant Self Service

For additional information contact the Customer
Call Center at 1-888-737-0259